

365
Blessings



Dr. Johnson Cherian M.D.Ph.D

"365 Blessings"

This book is dedicated to Mr. Balu Abraham, my friend, who fulfilled the following Biblical proverb in my time of distress in the year 2008.

.....There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)
May God bless him and his family.

Dr. Johnson Cherian M.D.Ph.D.

365 Blessings

Daily Devotional

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

At the outset, I thank God the Father and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for enabling me to write these daily devotionals with the guidance of the HoLY Spirit. This work would not have been possible otherwise and may all the glory and praise be to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

"365 Blessings" had its inception on the World Wide Web in 2009 (with a different title) and had a very great following on many Christian forums, websites and blogs. Since it was a great blessing to believers worldwide, I decided to put it in hard copy with a lot more of spiritual insight added to it.

Wouldn't it be great to wake up every morning and meditate on the Word of God, especially God's promises and blessings? Or perhaps you are one who reads devotionals in the evening; so this would be a good reminder of God's promises and blessings before your rest at night.

O weary soul, the travails of your wilderness must be depressing, but the light of God's blessings contained in his Word will dispel the darkness in the deep recesses of your soul and spirit. Just as the weary traveller in the desert is refreshed by the cool waters of an oasis, so will the readings of this daily devotional refresh you. It will remind you that God cares in the midst of turbulent situations of your life and that healing and peace are his blessings for your life everyday.

Take time and meditate on each promise or blessing and witness the faithfulness of God in the life of his saints. You are special to God and he loves you with an everlasting love.

May heavenly joy, peace and love flood your entire being as you go through these devotionals and may the Holy Spirit prepare you for that glorious day when you will meet your Savior Jesus Christ.

I thank my family (wife Veena, children Salome & Kezia) for their continual love and support as this book took shape. I am grateful to members of El Shaddai Church, Eraviperoor for their invaluable prayers. I thank Mr. C.V. Vadavana & Sathyam Publications for bringing out this daily devotional in print.

I am grateful to Pastor Benison Mathai and members of the Church of God in Qatar for their continual prayer support for me and my family.

Now....

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy; to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. (Jude 1:24, 25)

Dr. Johnson Cherian MD.PhD.
07/07/2011

January 1

Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay." (Habakkuk 2:2, 3)

Has the Lord given you a promise for which you have prayed but not seen its fulfillment? Is it lingering longer than you thought it would? The above verse says, "Though it linger, wait for it..." "it will certainly come and not delay..."

The Lord promised Abraham not just a child but a whole lot of descendants as good a number as the stars of the sky. But when the promise did not attain fulfillment soon, he chose to have a child through a maid of his and perhaps was satisfied with whatever he could achieve.

At age 99, 24 years after he had left the Ur of the Chaldeans, God again spoke to him saying,

"As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" (Genesis 17:15-18)

Abraham felt the situation was hilarious. Him 99 & Sarah 89. Surely God had a sense of humor.

So he replied... "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" meaning "Don't take all the trouble God and leave us alone. Just bless Ishmael. I'll settle for that."

Has that been your attitude lately? Are you trying to be content with whatever you have in hand even when God has promised you greater things?

Read how God responded to what Abraham said.

Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. (Genesis 17:19)

And it did happen as God promised.

What God has promised, he will bring to fulfillment in your life too. So even though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

January 2

**For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."
(Hebrews 10:37)**

One of the things that we have to keep reminding ourselves is that Jesus is coming back for his children who live for him. Not the ones who live for themselves or for the world.

The verse before the above one in Hebrews 10 says,
You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:36)

Perseverance is difficult, yet we have to do it. Doing the will of God is not an easy thing with all the near fatal attractions that Satan brings in our lives. The Bible says, "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. (1 John 2:3-6)

If we do not obey the Word of God, we are liars and there is no truth in us, but if we obey his Word, his love is made complete in us.

The last part of the above verse would seem to be impossible to attain- walking as Jesus walked.

But John the Apostle urges us to do that.

If gaining heaven was as simple as some make it out to be, heaven would have been overpopulated. But Jesus said,
"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 7:13, 14)

Only a few find it.....So what's to be done??

The Apostle John writes,

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Are you doing the will of God? If you are, Jesus is coming back for you and for others like you who are willing to humble themselves and do his will.

January 3

Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. (James 3:18)

As Christians we are called to be peacemakers and not ones who create strife and discord. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

Not only sons but also daughters.

Paul the Apostle exhorts the believers in Philippi saying, "I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with

Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.
(Philippians 4:2, 3)

It doesn't take much time for friends to become foes if they are not truly humble in their hearts. But some may ask, "How can I agree with someone who is not right in his/her ways?"

Well, it's better not to argue and lose the joy and peace we have (that is given by the Holy Spirit of God). Only prayer can bring about a change in the person who is wrong and it's better to wait on the Lord rather than fight and become bad examples to others who are yet young in the Lord.

Paul here is exhorting the other believers to help Euodia & Syntyche and also pleads with these ladies to agree. How about you? Are you a peacemaker?

Remember, "Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."

As a believer always be a peacemaker and this promise will come true in your lives.

January 4

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (Revelation 3:8)

A promise given to the church at Philadelphia in Asia Minor. Interestingly out of the 7 churches that were given admonitions, only the churches at Philadelphia and Smyrna survived because they humbled themselves and moved forward based on the Word given by the Holy Spirit to them.

Jesus knows the spiritual strength that we have as believers. Some are strong while some are not. Yet he expects us to keep his Word and not deny his name in any way with whatever strength we have.

Jesus is the one who has the authority over every aspect of our lives. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. (Revelation 3:7)

The doors that the enemy shuts in your lives can be opened any moment by your Savior. He has all the keys with him.

Do you believe that? He is Almighty God. Trust in him. Praise him for he alone is your deliverer.

Pray this day that Jesus Christ opens up the doors that the enemy has shut in your lives.

Believe that it will happen and praise God for it. Remember that he can not only open shut doors but also open new doors and new ways. When the need arose, God opened up a new way in the Red Sea. A way which no one had traversed before. A way that no one could have imagined of. But there it was; and every Israelite who had got out of Egypt walked and experienced the miracle. So it will be in your life too.

January 5

But this is what the LORD says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and

plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save." (Isaiah 49:25)

Are you worried because your children are truant & unruly? Can it be that the enemy of your soul- Satan- has taken them captive? So many prayers; yet you do not see any change in their lives! Be assured this day that your prayers will not go unanswered. Jesus will set them free.

Perhaps it's not your children but your spouse or parents who have become captives to the devil. Jesus will set them free. Jesus advised his disciples to fast and pray to get victory over unbelief and the demon powers.

Use the Word of God to fight against the enemy. It's sharper than any double edged sword and can destroy strongholds. Do not despair. Take up the shield of faith and fight.

The Apostle Paul says,

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:4)

God says, "I will contend with those who contend with you..." Believe in him. Do what his Word says in the book of Ephesians:

Finally, 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. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests..... (Ephesians 6:12-18)

Will you do it? You will see victory in your lives soon.

January 6

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Peter 5:4)

The Good Shepherd (John 10:11), The Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20), The Shepherd of our Souls (1 Peter 2:25) & the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4) are all one and the same- Jesus Christ.

Peter the Apostle, says that the Chief Shepherd is going to appear and when that happens he's going to give those who have lived faithful to him, a crown of glory that will never fade away. Earthly crowns are temporary and those who wear them rejoice for a while wearing them, but those who receive the crown of glory will rejoice forever because that is one of the rewards that the Lord has kept for them.

The Bible says,
For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17)

How wonderful that Jesus will wipe away all traces of every sorrowful experience that the faithful endured while they lived on earth.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Revelation 21:4, 5)

Yes, the Chief Shepherd is coming back soon. He's making everything new. Are you ready to meet him? Are you ready to wear the crown of glory? Do not let Satan cheat you as he cheated Adam & Eve. Be prepared to meet your Chief Shepherd. He will give you the crown of glory.

January 7

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever. (John 6:58)

Are you feeding on the life giving manna? As a believer, it is imperative that you feed on the Word of God continually. It will refresh, rejuvenate, rekindle, repair, rescue, regenerate and revitalize the different areas of your life. Jesus said, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. (John 6:63)

Do you spend time with the Word every morning and evening? God will speak to you as often as you read the Word. If you have been slack in reading the Word, please take a decision today to spend more time with the Word.

Jesus said, "Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." (John 6:58)

Manna was temporarily given to the Israelites to satisfy their hunger in the wilderness. The Word that we read is life giving and the one who lives by it will live forever.

If you have hunger in you to hear God speak to you there is no better way but to feed regularly on the Word of God.

Some consider reading of the Word, a trivial matter. But God places great emphasis on it, that's why the Bible says that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

So give the Word of God its right place in your life and be blessed.

January 8

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)

Before we place our proposals before men, as believers we should place it at the Lord's

feet for his approval and blessings. If it is not the Lord's will, might as well not proceed with it. If we can't clearly hear the Lord's thoughts regarding the issue in question, a fleece can be placed in the Lord's presence. Too many fleeces can bring doubts too, so it's best to place one or at the most two as Gideon did (Judges 6:36-40)

The Lord will speak but sometimes we have to wait upon him. He may speak through his Word as we meditate on it, he may speak through dreams and visions, he may speak through the sermon that we are listening to, he may speak through another believer and so many other ways.

When the Amalekites burned Ziklag and carried away David's wives and children, we read in the 1st book of Samuel how he enquired of the Lord regarding the matter and how the Lord guided him:

David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue." (1 Samuel 30:6-8)

If we have the approval of the Lord, then we have the backing of the Holy Spirit too and he will help us succeed in the venture that we wish to undertake. So commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

January 9

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:18)

Can you affirm what Paul the apostle says here? Though in certain situations we may feel that we are helpless, we must believe that God is all powerful and everything is in his hands. Yes, God will rescue you from every evil attack of Satan and bring you safely to his heavenly kingdom.

The Apostle Peter writes,

If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) - if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (2 Peter 2:6-9)

The Bible also says,

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.....(2 Chronicles 16:9)

King Asa of Judah, in the early years of his reign was totally committed to the Lord but later on he associated with wicked kings and was admonished by Hanani the seer who told him, "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand. (2 Chronicles 16:7, 8)

Are you fully committed to him? If yes, then be assured this day that the Lord's eyes are on you to strengthen your heart and he will rescue you from every evil attack of Satan and bring you safely into his heavenly kingdom.

January 10

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

Amidst all the problems that we as believers face in our day to day lives, isn't it wonderful that God gives us joy and peace as we keep trusting in him. The Bible says, And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:5)

Amidst great troubles, David said,

Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?" Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:6-8)

It's so wonderful that because we have trusted in Jesus, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (John 16:7)

Though we may feel depressed sometimes because of certain persistent problems, very soon we see a change. That's because the Comforter is with us. He renews our hope each day that these problems will finally come to an end and we will rejoice that the Lord has once again done great things for us. May the Comforter refresh you this day as you read this and may he renew the hope that is there in you.

January 11

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it. (Revelation 2:17)

So we are going to receive new names. Any guesses what yours would be? Frankly most of us never had a choice to select our own names. As we came of age we finally knew that we were this one or that one. And some never like their names; they would like to be called differently. The daring, even change their names and get it published too.

Sometime in the past, God decided to change a couple of names. He renamed Abram...Abraham and Sarai....Sarah. Well, God seems to be in the name changing business and as the above verse indicates, every over comer will receive a new name. A couple of verses more from the book of Revelation regarding names:

Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him

my new name. (Revelation 3:12)

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. (Revelation 22: 3, 4)

So we as believers in Jesus Christ will be receiving new names and also the name of God and the name of the city of God will be on us. A new name and a new address. And the owners name too. There won't be a change of address any more then.

January 12

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

By his power God will fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. The results may not be obvious immediately but in God's time, your efforts will bear fruit and you will glorify God for his goodness.

The Bible says,

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23, 24)

The Apostle Paul writes to the Philippians,

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. (Philippians 1: 3-7)

The ultimate rewarder is God and everything good comes from him. Give thanks to the Lord for all you receive as your wages. Do not murmur or grumble, because as a child of God, all your blessings come from him. You may feel like being cheated by the people for whom you work for, but thank God and he will give you more, because it is from his hands that you receive all blessings.

The Bible says,

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6, 7)

January 13

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)

So many mountains stand in the way of believers blessings, yet they never ever use this little piece of advice that Jesus gave his disciples.

It's not an isolated verse. Here are a few that speak the same.

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. (Matthew 21:21)

"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. (Mark 11:23)

He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. (Luke 17:6)

What's that mountain that's standing in the way of your happiness? A mountain of debt/of sickness/of joblessness/of lack of joy & peacelessness/family discord/children's problems.....

Speak to that mountain today. In fact, you must command it to leave in the name of Jesus.

Say, "In the name of Jesus, I command this mountain of debt to be removed from my life....

"In the name of Jesus, I command every cause of discord to leave my married & family life....

"In the name of Jesus, I command this mountain of sickness to leave me...

Jesus said, "these mountains will obey you"
Try it and you will see great changes in your life.

You have prayed about your problems, praised God, meditated on his Word and worshipped Jesus; now enter into a new phase of faith. Command in Jesus' Name.

January 14

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17)

What's that gift or talent that you have? Are you putting it to use and bringing glory to God? Don't consider it as trivial. The Lord placed that in you with a purpose. And that purpose is to bring glory to his name.

The Apostle James states here very clearly that the gift that is in you has come from the Father of the heavenly lights and with him there's no changing nature as is seen with man.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy:

I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Timothy 1:5, 6)

That's what each one of us are supposed to do. Fan into flame the gift that the Lord has given us.

Paul again exhorts him saying,
For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord.....(2 Timothy 1:7, 8a)

Can you sing well? Is that the gift that the Lord has given you? Can you play musical instruments? Can you write poems or prose? Can you preach? Can you teach? Do you have the gift of helping others? Is visiting the sick and saying a word of comfort your gift from God? 100's of gifts. 100's of talents.

What's your gift from the Father of the heavenly lights? Are you willing to bring glory to God by putting your gift to use? He's waiting for you. Do it for him. Remember the price Jesus paid for you on the cross. Do not sit idle. Glorify your Master & Lord.

January 15

Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior. (Psalm 24:3-5)

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

And in the book of Revelation we read,
But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

Even liars are out...Some would say that's not a sin that equals idolatry or murder or sexual immorality. Well, one can't change what's written in the Word of God.

In Psalms 15 we read the same...who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue....

For some believers, lying is a habit and they do it for small things and for big. They do not realize that the Spirit of God who resides in them is the Spirit of Truth and that he abhors lying.

Jesus prayed to the Father for his disciples:
Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)

Jesus wants each one of us to sanctify ourselves with his Word and the Holy Spirit. Why??
Only for 1 reason...He prays,
"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. (John 17:24)

May the Lord help us all to join him and see his glory when the time comes. Praise the Lord.

January 16

For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (Hebrews 13:14)

Some people love the place that they live in so much that they keep bragging about it. How about you? How much ever one may love it, as a believer one must remember the above verse. The places that we live in are our temporary homes. We are to look forward to the city that is to come.

There are others who have to live in different places because of financial problems or because of their jobs. Sometimes frequent shifting becomes a pain and people despair. For such people, if they are believer's, the above verse is a source of comfort because they will finally be staying at one place which they can finally call home.

And the places that we live in may not be the ideal ones as some would testify. Uncertainties loom large because of strife's, conflicts, job insecurities, financial calamities and personal problems.

The Word of God exhorts us in this matter and I quote:

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. (2 Corinthians 4:17)

So how do we overcome in this matter?

It's best for us to take the advice that the Apostle Paul gave the Corinthian believer's: So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

Like Abraham, let us look forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

January 17

So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go. (Exodus 3:20)

Has the enemy, Satan, taken possession of anything that you own? Are you tormented by evil powers? As a believer are you always restless/confused/jittery/fearful/unsteady/irresponsible/unapproachable/angry/stressed???

Think about it. If it's a regular happening, it's not from Jesus who said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Do you experience this "rest" that Jesus promised?

He also promised, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

And remember, Jesus gave this caution and promise,
The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Is Satan stealing your peace and joy? Is he killing the peace & joy in your family life or
married life. Is he destroying the goodness inside you? Don't give in to him. Stand firm.

The Bible says, Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from
you. (James 4:7)

Remember what God promised Moses & the Israelites in the title verse here. "So I will
stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform
among them. After that, he will let you go." (Exodus 3:20)

The enemy that is tormenting you or your family may be stubborn but believe that Jesus is
all powerful and all authority in heaven and earth is in his hands. He will set you free.
Resist the devil by continual prayer, worship and praise. The enemy will let you go because
Jesus will destroy his power. Praise the Lord.

January 18

**He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he
has done. (Proverbs 19:17)**

It's not right to accuse a believer who is poor or financially stressed by saying that it's
because of his/her sins that they are suffering like that. If we can put ourselves in the
situation that they are in and imagine the pains that they have to undergo, we will surely
be more understanding.

The above verse sounds strange but is true and those who do help the poor regularly have
seen that the Lord has rewarded them bountifully. The ones who do it, do it because they
love the Lord and his people and not because they will receive a reward.

Jesus also said,

"When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives,
or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But
when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be
blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the
righteous." (Luke 14:12-14)

The Bible says,

Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. The
LORD will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not
surrender him to the desire of his foes. (Psalm 41:1, 2)

If we are looking at eternal rewards, these acts of kindness will come to us naturally and it
would be a pleasant sacrifice in the sight of the Lord. So let us take a decision and follow
what Jesus said. Paul the Apostle also affirms this by saying,
Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we
do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially
to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:9, 10)

The good that you do, especially for the poor will never go unrewarded. May Jesus bless

you now and always for doing that.

January 19

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

Have you been hoping? Have you been waiting? Take heart. Your prayers are going to be answered. Will you believe that the Lord can do an extraordinary miracle for you? What's an extraordinary miracle? Let me quote a few from the Word of God to bolster your faith.

The men of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our Lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive." "Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive. And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken. (2 Kings 2:19-22)

Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in that region. While the company of the prophets was meeting with him, he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot and cook some stew for these men." One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine. He gathered some of its gourds and filled the fold of his cloak. When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat it, they cried out, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it. Elisha said, "Get some flour." He put it into the pot and said, "Serve it to the people to eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot. (2 Kings 4:38-41)

The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to live." And he said, "Go." Then one of them said, "Won't you please come with your servants?" "I will," Elisha replied. And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water. "Oh, my Lord," he cried out, "it was borrowed!" The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. "Lift it out," he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it. (2 Kings 6:1-7)

In the above 3 miracles, it was not the power of the salt or the flour or the stick that brought about the miracle. Instead it was the power of the Word of God that was spoken by Elisha. Will you believe this day that the Lord will do an extraordinary miracle for you for the thing that you have been hoping and praying for? The Lord Jesus Christ will speak the Word for your deliverance.

It's my prayer for you that you may experience that miracle and glorify God.

January 20

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' (Jeremiah 33:3)

Does the Lord still speak to his children as in olden biblical times? As he spoke to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob and to scores of others? Some say that God speaks only through His Word now, others have had dreams and visions and are witnesses of that.

Whatever it be, I believe that he is still the same- an unchanging God and he communicates with his children, whatever means he chooses to use. May not be your preferred way, but he does speak and his children are witnesses of that.

He told Jeremiah, "Call to me and I will answer you..." Answer how?? By telling him great and unsearchable things that the prophet didn't know.

In Jeremiah's case, the Lord's word came to him when he was still confined in the courtyard of the guard. God spoke to him about the future of Israel. He said:
"Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. (Jeremiah 33:6, 7)
And it did happen as the Lord said.

In the Bible, we read of people receiving specific directions from God when they faced many problems. God directed them in his paths and they were able to overcome obstacles and gain victory over their enemies.

Today, if you are confused about many things regarding your life, not knowing how things will work out, remember what he told Jeremiah:

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

January 21

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:4)

How would it be when we appear with him in glory? How different will it be than what we experience now? I believe it will be a total change of what we have experienced here on earth.

The Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth:

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:53)

As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:48, 49)

So we are going to bear the likeness of the man from heaven- Jesus. O, how wonderful that would be!

We have a glimpse of the resurrected body as we read of Jesus appearing to his disciples after he was raised up from the dead.

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at

my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:36-43)

While we are in this mortal body, the struggle continues. Battling sin, Satan and the worldly desires day in and day out. But we who are in Christ have the promise: So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.(1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

Shall we shout a Hallelujah to that?

January 22

He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:6)

This verse is sandwiched between 2 other verses which have a great bearing on this verse.

God will make our righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. When?? The answer is given in the preceding verse which says, Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: (Psalm 37:5)
2 things to be noticed here are the words commit & trust. Commit your way and then trust in him. Are you committing all your ways to the Lord? And after committing are you trusting in him? Then surely, your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

What else is to be done after committing and trusting?? The answer is given in the verse after 37:6

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him..... (Psalm 37:7)

Committing, trusting, waiting.....Are you willing to do these? God will not fail you if you do these.

The Bible says,

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30,31)

He is a good God, he loves you and he will grant your request in his time.

January 23

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

From a human point of view, it's quite astounding that Jesus should say, "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Have you ever thought about the number?

Researchers say these about the hairs on our head.

"Hair is the fastest growing tissue in the body, second only to bone marrow. 35 meters of hair fiber is produced every day on the average adult scalp. The average scalp has 100,000 hairs. Redheads have the least at 80,000; brown and black haired persons have about 100,000; and blondes have the most at 120,000. 90% of scalp hairs are growing and 10% are resting. It is normal to lose 100 hairs per day from the scalp. You must lose over 50% of your scalp hairs before it is apparent to anyone."

We can only approximate. Only God knows the exact number!

The finer details of our lives are also known to him. Nothing is hidden.

The greatest thing is that he loves us despite all our frailties. Man may condemn us because of our outward appearances, but God loves us as we are, because he intended to create us for his own purpose and glory.

Are you unhappy that no one cares for you as you would like them to? Are you sad that you are not appreciated by others? Take heart. Jesus cares for you.

He says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Of much worth in the eyes of Jesus!

January 24

"They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. (Malachi 3:17, 18)

These verses speak of the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. The distinction may not be immediately apparent what with the wicked seemingly being blessed and the righteous suffering.

The psalmist Asaph seemed troubled by such thoughts:

But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.

For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.

They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. (Psalm 73:2-9)

Sometimes thoughts like these trouble many believers. Why are the wicked prospering while they are suffering in some ways. As Malachi wrote...the distinction will be clear only at God's appointed time.

Then the righteous or them who serve God will be his treasured possession and the wicked will be judged with eternal punishment.

Asaph's was troubled because of the prosperity of the wicked. He said, Surely in vain have

I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me (Psalm 73:13, 14, 16)

God clarified Asaph's doubts over God's righteousness when he entered God's sanctuary and his spiritual eyes were opened. He then understood the final destiny of the wicked.

And he sang,

Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.

How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! (Psalm 73:18, 19)

Always remember, the prosperity of the wicked or those who do not serve God are only temporary, but you as a child of God are his "treasured possession" and will remain like that forever.

January 25

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, (Psalm 103:2, 3) (NIV)

I was just comparing these verses in different versions of the Bible. These were the findings:

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; (Psalm 103:2, 3)(NAS)

Bless (affectionately, gratefully praise) the Lord, O my soul, and forget not [one of] all His benefits-- Who forgives [every one of] all your iniquities, Who heals [each one of] all your diseases, (Psalm 103:2, 3)(Amplified)

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; (Psalm 103:2, 3)(KJV)

Bless Jehovah, O my soul, And forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; (Psalm 103:2, 3)(ASV)

There's not much change in the meaning of the verses in any of these versions. The points to note being that God forgives all our sins/iniquities and heals all our diseases.

Many do believe in the sin-forgiving ability of the Lord, but when it comes to healing many doubt.

There can be many arguments regarding this, but the point is whether we are willing to take the Word literally as it is, for "today".

Can anyone of us say that the verse is untrue?

Even if we haven't seen healing in a specific case/ many cases, we cannot state that the Lord does not heal now.

He does heal and many of us are witnesses of it. So even today, shall we believe that he is still the disease-healing God as he is the sin-forgiving God?

Can we emphatically say, "Yes God, you heal all my diseases as I read in your Word and may your name be glorified".

Can we exhort ourselves and say what the psalmist sang: Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases. That would be wonderful.

January 26

**Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.
(Psalm 91:3)**

This promise is for all who dwell in the shelter of the Most High. Such a person can confidently say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
(Psalm 91:2)

Most of us must have had enough encounters with the fowler and his snares in our lives. Of the fowler (Satan), Jesus had some exceptionally caustic statements to make and it is nothing but profound truth:

"He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
(John 8:44)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.....(John 10:10)

Of course, there are many so called Christians who do not believe that the fowler exists and is planning and orchestrating evil continually.

There are others who ignore him even when they know that it is because of his tricks that they are suffering.

The Apostle Paul had this to say regarding the unforgiving attitude in some of the believers in the Corinthian Church and the possibility of Satan taking advantage of it.

If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven - if there was anything to forgive - I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:10, 11)

Are you attentive to the voice of God in your life? It is most essential if you have to escape the fowler's snare.

He can outwit you with his schemes if you do not continually dwell in the shelter of the Most High.

If you do dwell in the shelter of the most high and abide in his shadow, this promise (surely he will save you from the fowler's snare...)will continually be fulfilled in your life too.

January 27

**"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
(Proverbs 30:5)**

Interestingly, there are many who are fond of finding flaws in the Word of God, the Bible. Actually the Bible was written over a period of 1400 to 1800 years by more than 40 different authors. Certain mistakes and discrepancies can be found because of human errors. But the fact remains as Agur son of Jakeh says here- Every word of God is flawless.

Do you question the validity of what you read in the Bible everyday? Of course all of us have many doubts and there are many things that we don't understand when we read the Word. Yet, whatever God wanted mankind to know and understand is very clear. That's because the Bible was written by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.

Yes, every word of God is flawless because God himself is flawless. His promises are flawless. Do you believe that?

King David, that great psalmist of Israel says,
And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. (Psalm 12:6)

Again David affirms the same when he says,
As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 18:30)

God is our shield. The Psalmist affirms that many times.

My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart. (Psalm 7:10)

The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:2)

You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. (Psalm 18:35)

Believe in the Lord. Believe in his words. Believe in his promises. That will bring you peace that passes all understanding.

January 28

**"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."
(Luke 2:14)**

When Jesus was born, there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

If you are reading this, God's favor rests upon you and that will bring peace to you amidst all the troubles that you face in this chaotic world.

It's not a trivial matter if God's favor has rested upon you. The Apostle Peter puts it this manner:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9, 10)

The Psalmist prays,

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands. (Psalm 90:17)

The Bible says,

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. (Psalm 84:11)

Yes, we are the people of God and God's favor rests upon us. Let us rejoice that God has chosen us as a people for himself, that we have received mercy and that we are a people belonging to him.

January 29

He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love. (Song of Solomon 2:4)

Do you believe that the love that Jesus has for you is much much greater than the love that the woman here had for her lover?

God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3)

Everlasting love can come only from an everlasting God. The Bible says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

John, the Apostle writes,

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (1 John 3:1)

The Apostle Paul writing to the Ephesians says,

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

The love that Jesus has for you is one that surpasses knowledge and if you have to really grasp how wide, long, high and deep it is, you would need more than a lifetime.

Yes, Jesus loves you, much more than you can ever imagine, much more than you can ever grasp. In fact, the banner that he's held over you is the banner of love.

January 30

He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:8)

Do you feel that you may not be able to endure all the trials that you are facing and reach the desired end of it all- eternal union with God?

Is there a question frequently popping up in your mind whether you should have signed up for this trip- living for Jesus? Here's a promise for you right from the Word of God- He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How can a person say with surety that he/she will make it to the desired end? Well, that's what the gospel is all about. It's not on our merit, but by his Grace. The Bible says, "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful." (1

Corinthians 1:9)

So, be assured this day, brother/sister in Christ. Jesus will keep strengthening you with his Holy Spirit till the moment you join him in eternity or at his coming. You are precious to him. As precious as Jesus is to his father.

"As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him." (1 Peter 2:4)

The closing verses of the book of Jude says it perfectly:

Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, [be] glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

(Jude 1:24,25)

Shall we say an amen to that?

January 31

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." (Acts 23:11)

A promise to the apostle that his ministry is not yet over and that he has to testify about Jesus in Rome. God spoke to the apostle not vaguely but specifically. It was not something said haphazardly but pinpointing a place where God would take him to, come what may.

In the very next verses, we read of a plan by the Jews to kill him. But since God had given him the promise, could anyone kill him?

The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. (Acts 23:12, 13)

God foiled their plans.

Later on in Chapter 25, we read of another plan to kill Paul.

They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. (Acts 25:3)

God did not allow it to happen.

Traveling to Italy later on, the ship that Paul traveled by was hit by a violent storm.

Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. (Acts 27:14, 15)

God protected Paul because of his promise and plan.

He landed up on an island called Malta where God had a ministry for him to do.

3 months later he traveled again and finally landed in Rome.

Luke, the physician writes,

When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

(Acts 28:16)

The book of Acts ends with these verses:

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught

about the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 28:30, 31)

God is faithful. He will foil every plan the enemy brings against the promise that he has given you. If he has promised you something, he will definitely bring it to pass. Just walk with him.

February 1

The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isaiah 51:11)

Are you frequently haunted by painful memories of the past? The injustice that was meted out to you. The gall and bitterness of it all. How could it happen? Why did it happen? Does God hear you and see you sighing regarding it? Yes he does. And he wants to comfort you this day.

Remember, he heard the cry of the Israelites in Egypt and put an end to their misery by setting them free. He also brought them back from captivity in Babylon even though he had decreed that punishment for them because of their sins. Regarding Israel the Lord had this to say though they did not follow him whole-heartedly: Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:20)

The Lord's heart yearns for you, he has great compassion on you. He will give you so much of love that gladness and joy will overtake you, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Another great promise that the Lord gave the Israelites is found in the book of Joel:

'I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten - the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm - my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed. (Joel 2:25-27)

Trust in the Lord. Live for him. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

February 2

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." (John 11:4)

The story starts in this manner: Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." (John 11:1-3) That's when Jesus said the words in the verse above.

Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death." A promise from the master for the sisters.

The sisters must have been happy on hearing that. Perhaps they must have told a few friends and close relatives what Jesus said. They must have reassured Lazarus that he was going to recover.

But alas! Lazarus died...How shocking it must have been for the sisters. The many questions that must have hounded them. The many whispers they must have had to hear about them telling others that Jesus had said that Lazarus would not die. The gall of it all being that Jesus didn't even come and visit Lazarus or pray for him.

Well, Jesus had a surprise in store for them. And no one other than their Master & Lord knew it.

Who would have imagined that this man Lazarus who was dead and his body kept in a cave would be brought back to life? That too after 4 days of dying.

"Take away the stone," Jesus said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:39, 40)

That sounds preposterous, doesn't it? But this was no ordinary man speaking into the air. This was the Son of God, the one who said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

And then...the miracle...Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." (John 11:43, 44)

Imagine the aahhs...and the ohs....that could be heard. The rejoicing and the hugs. That's my Lord Jesus for you, even today.

Now what's that thing you were saying is impossible in your life?
Remember my Lord's words: "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"
Will you believe? Good!!!

February 3

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

Referring to the Antichrist, Paul the Apostle here says that Jesus will destroy him by the splendor of his coming. The end of this age will see the final conflict between good and evil, God and satanic forces.

The Apostle Paul writes to the Thessalonians:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that

he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

Of course the fate of the satanic forces is sealed as is written in the Word of God. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

The Bible also says,
If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)

The Lake of Fire is the second death. Only those whose names are found in the book of life and who overcome will escape the second death.
He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

Is your name in the book of life? If yes, you are blessed and you will enter your eternal home in heaven when God calls you. If you are not sure that your name is in the book of life, take a decision today to live for Jesus. Repent of your sins. Accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord. The Bible says,
Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)
Your decision is vital.

February 4

He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you." (Exodus 15:26)

A promise from God to the Israelites in the wilderness. The key words for them in this verse were- listen carefully....do what is right....pay attention....keep all decrees..... Most of them later on neither listened carefully, nor did what was right, nor paid attention and neither kept his decrees. They suffered as a result. Some of the curses resulting in sicknesses for not keeping God's commands are outlined in Deuteronomy Ch. 28.
The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. (Deuteronomy 28:22)

The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. (Deuteronomy 28:27)

The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. (Deuteronomy 28:28)

That's a nerve shattering list...and there's more in that chapter.

The point that God stressed upon the Israelites was- If you obey me, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you. There are other verses too that affirm that God heals our sicknesses.

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, (Psalm 103:3)

He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:20)

Well, He is still the God who heals, whether someone believes it or not. He's not changed...He is the One and Only Unchanging God.

February 5

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:11)

In the book of Esther we read of a wonderful blessing that God bestowed upon the Jews who feared annihilation because of a deadly plan by a man called Haman who had decided to wipe out every Jew. God overthrew his plan and instead of pain and death, they were blessed in this way as we read in Esther Ch. 8
The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor. (Esther 8:16)

Darkness, sorrow and belittling were replaced by light and joy and honor.

How remarkable.

Esther, Mordecai and the Jews fasted and prayed and God brought a total reversal of things as they were to be.

So do not despair because of the circumstances you are facing. Go into God's presence with prayer and fasting and God will stretch forth his hand to bless you just as King Xerxes held out the golden scepter for Esther.

King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate. Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews. Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him. (Esther 8:1-4)

Jesus loves you and he will give you light and joy and honor just as he gave it to Esther, Mordecai and the Jews.

February 6

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. (Exodus 14:15, 16)

Are you stuck at some place dear brother/sister in Christ? Stagnating in your spiritual life? The Lord says, "Move on!"

How long are you going to latch on to your family traditions and stagnate in your spiritual life?

What are the things that are hindering you from having a close walk with Jesus? Free yourself from those shackles and move on.

You have to reach the heavenly Canaan and there are so many obstacles. God told Moses, "Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground."

Piece of cake? No way! But that's the Lord for you. Stretching Moses' faith to the limits, just to see whether he would snap. Almost did snap a few times, yet here, his obedience to God's command made him and the Israelites see the unbelievable.

The Bible says,

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. (Exodus 14:22)

There's a way in the Red Sea or the monstrous problem that you are experiencing in your life, dear brother/sister in Christ. You may not be able to see the way but God can and he will open the way if you trust in his words and be obedient to him. Move on.

February 7

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." (Genesis 37:5-7)

What if Joseph had kept his dreams to himself? Wouldn't his brothers have hated him? Sometimes people hate children of God for no fault of theirs. Jealousy is one of the root causes of hatred. The Bible is replete with many such instances right from the creation of Adam & Eve. Satan was jealous of the blessings that were being bestowed by God upon Adam and Eve. Look at Cain; he was jealous and hated his brother Abel because God accepted Abel's offering and not his.

And the stories go on and on...but the difference is made by the promise. And what God promises he fulfills despite the jealousies and the hatreds.

Joseph's dreams were God given and many things happened against their fulfillment but God saw to it that in the fullness of time, his time, they attained fulfillment.

Regarding this the Psalmist says,

He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; and he sent a man before them - Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true. The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom. (Psalm 105:16-22)

Regarding the promise to the Israelites, in the same psalm we read,

For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy; he gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for - that they might keep his precepts and observe his laws. Praise the LORD. (Psalm 105:42-45)

Have you a promise given by God? And you are worried about all the hate that is coming against you. Remember Joseph and his dreams. Yours too will attain fulfillment in God's time.

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

February 8

I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten - the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm - my great army that I sent among you. (Joel 2:25)

Joel's prophecy begins with the prophetic utterance of impending invasion of the land by different kinds of locusts destroying the produce of the land. It may also have indicated the invasions of the land by the Chaldeans.

"What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten." (Joel 1:4)

"The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up ; the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails." (Joel 1:10)

Then comes the summons from the Lord to the people of the land to fast and pray and repent of their sins.

'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. (Joel 2:12, 13)

And the promises for repenting and living a life pleasing to the Lord are detailed from verses 19- 27 of Ch. 2.

The verse that we have here as the title verse is a part of these, in which God promises to give back what they have lost due to the locust invasions.

'I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten - the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm - my great army that I sent among you. (Joel 2:25)

Whatever blessings you lost because of your rebellion and sin will also be returned by the Lord if you fast and pray and repent and live a life pleasing to God. He is a good God. He loves you. Live for him. He will restore you.

February 9

See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. (Exodus 23:20)

A promise given to the Israelites as they traveled towards Canaan; the land of promise. God was sending his angel ahead of the traveling Israelites to fight for them and protect them from their enemies, but there were instructions for them concerning the angel: Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. (Exodus 23:21, 22)

"Pay attention, listen carefully to the angel and do all that God said" were the instructions. That was the Old Testament.

For us, as believers, God has given us his Holy Spirit to guide us till we enter eternity in heaven. The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, of whom Jesus said, But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you

all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)
But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:13-15)

We have to pay attention and listen carefully to the Holy Spirit and obey the Word of God as detailed in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit will teach us all things through the Word and he will remind us of everything that Jesus said and he will guide us into all truth. The Holy Spirit will guard us and guide us to the place that God has prepared for us.

The question is: Are we willing to obey him?

If yes, then we can be sure that he will surely finish the work that God has begun in us.

February 10

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. (1 John 2:1)

What a blessing! You and me, when we sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

And sin comes so easily. Maybe not in deed, but in thought and in speech it is rampant in the lives of so many believer's. No wonder the Lord told Cain the all too familiar phrase- "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Genesis 4: 7)

Why does sin crouch at our door? Why does it desire to have us?

Simply because satan is jealous and wants to steal the fellowship that we have with God and wants sin to be a stumbling block in our lives from receiving God's blessings.

But as God advised Cain--You must master sin. What happened though was the other way around--sin mastered Cain and he murdered his brother Abel.

Let us not let sin master us. The Bible advises us thus:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (Hebrews 12:1)

Sin can entangle us like a creeper entangles a good plant, but we must cry out to God to save us from such sins that entangles us. We have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Let us abide in him so that the following maybe fulfilled in our lives too.

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. (1 John 2:28)

Confident and unashamed... Hope we can be found in such a state.

February 11

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in

Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. (2 Chronicles 20:14, 15)

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah was afraid because the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites had declared war on him. Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him. Jehoshaphat praised and glorified God and cried to him for help. That is when the above prophecy and promise were given to Jehoshaphat and the people in Judah.

More specific directions were given to the king:
Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you." (2 Chronicles 20:16, 17)

Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever." As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. (2 Chronicles 20:20- 22)

The faithfulness of God was manifest again as he defeated the enemies of Judah. If you are being attacked by evil forces, cry out to God as Jehoshaphat did. Never forget to praise and glorify God in the midst of the attack. Jesus will deliver you and you will glorify him again for his faithfulness.

February 12

For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save his life from those who condemn him. (Psalm 109:31)

Who would have wondered that the lives of the people mentioned below would change dramatically by the power of the one mentioned in the verses above. Yes, El Shaddai- God Almighty did it and he can do it for you too.

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe - the richly ornamented robe he was wearing - and they took him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it. (Genesis 37:23, 24)

Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes. When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. (Esther 3:6)(Esther 4:1)

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from

the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. (Job 2: 7, 8)

The lives of Joseph, Mordecai and Job are just a few examples of what the Lord can do by his mighty power.

Read about their later lives after God delivered them by his mighty power.

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way !" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:41-43)

Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. And the city of Susa held a joyous celebration. Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful. (Esther 8:15)(Esther 9:4)

After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first....(Job 42: 10,12) If you are down in the dumps today, there's hope for you 'coz the God of Joseph, Mordecai and Job is still alive. He says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10) He is still able to do great wonders.

February 13

And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. (Joshua 3:7)

There is a special "Today" for everyone of us who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. A "Today" where God begins to exalt us for persevering and for being faithful to him.

That's what happened in the life of Joshua. Long years of being humble and faithful under the Lord's watchful eyes. In the shadow of a great leader for many years, yet not rebelling with others and trying to usurp authority. Not planning a coup to overthrow Moses, but waiting patiently for the Lord, fighting the battles that he was entrusted with and having faith that the God who called him was faithful and would be with him at all times.

The Bible says,

No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another. (Psalm 75:6,7)

When God began to exalt Joshua, the Israelites truly realized that God was with Joshua as he was with Moses.

For Joshua, God often pronounced miracles and victories even before Joshua dealt with the problems. Here are a few examples:

Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. (Joshua 6:2)

The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them(the five kings of the Amorites - the

kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon); I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you." (Joshua 10:8)

When God's time of exalting Joshua came, it truly could be seen by all. God exalts us in his ways and at his time. If we wait patiently and are faithful to him, we will experience the same..... in our work place, in the ministry or in any sphere of our lives.

February 14

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:4)

The Apostle Peter starts the chapter talking about the faith that we have now as believer's. He calls it "precious faith."

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: (2 Peter 1:1)

And then he talks about the nature of the promises given to those with the precious faith. As we read in the title verse-"very great and precious promises".

So we must not consider the promises given to us as believer's to be trivial. They are very great and precious. Through them we can participate in the divine nature thus escaping the corruption in the world. The Apostle states that the corruption in the world is due to evil desires.

If we do not hold fast to the promises, we don't partake of the divine nature and fall prey to evil desires of the world. This can either cause spiritual stagnation or destruction.

Many believer's are ineffective and unproductive because they care not to add certain qualities to the precious faith that they have received. Regarding this Peter elaborates: For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

O My! Is this so important? Read Peter's exhortation and conclusion: Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10, 11)

A rich welcome awaits us provided we obey these words of exhortation. May the Lord help us all to make our calling and election sure.

February 15

"Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - (Ephesians 6:2)

Not all children would approve of that, but the Word of God is Truth and it cannot be changed. As the verse states, it's the first commandment with a promise. What promise? This one:

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)

Well, it's an Old Testament promise, but holds good because the Apostle Paul reiterates it while writing to the Ephesians. Writing to the Colossians, Paul gives this advice: Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20) Some children of believer's will find that hard to digest, but then it is the Word of God and it cannot be changed.

As children grow up and mature, their thinking and responding to situations may not match with the parent's thinking and things start going awry.

One clue to how far children should go in obeying parents is given in another exhortation that the Apostle gives to wives.

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (Colossians 3:18)

As is fitting in the Lord. That's what is important. Anything that is not right according to the Word of God need not be obeyed or given into by a child. Of course, some children have no choice because of the strictness and unyielding nature of their parents. Nevertheless, obedience of children to their parents bring great blessings in their lives including the one mentioned in the title verse.

Are you a child? Do you obey your parents?

Are you a parent? Does your child/children obey you?

Ponder this for a moment. Find the reasons of why you don't/can't obey your parents or why your child/children don't obey you?

If both are living according to the Word, there will be a good relationship. If not, your heart needs a probing and things have to be set right. The sooner the better.

February 16

"Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria: "He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city," declares the LORD. (Isaiah 37:33,34)

King Hezekiah and the people of Judah were terrified because of the verbal insults, provocations and threats issued by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Hezekiah tried to reassure his men that God would protect them, but the repeated threats weakened him. He cried out to the Lord. He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz to enquire of the Lord as to what should be done.

Amongst the prophecies given by Isaiah were the words quoted in the title verse. The following was also said about the enemy king.

Because you rage against me and because your insolence has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will make you return by the way you came. (Isaiah 37:29)

About King Hezekiah, the Lord had this to say,

"This will be the sign for you, O Hezekiah: "This year you will eat what grows by itself, and

the second year what springs from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (Isaiah 37:30)

And God fulfilled what he said. What he did was this:

Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning - there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. (Isaiah 37:36, 37)

Jesus is powerful to deliver you from the enemy that is troubling you. Call out to him today. He will rise up and scatter the evil forces that are tormenting you and your family.

May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him. As smoke is blown away by the wind, may you blow them away; as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God. But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. (Psalm 68:1-3)

February 17

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

The prophet Isaiah prophesying about the millennial reign of Christ gives this promise from God to his people living then. Of course there are many who do not believe in the millennial reign of Christ after the second coming, but that's not the issue here. The verse that we have above is so marvelous. Can the Lord answer us now in this way? Of course he can. He answered Eleazer's prayer for bringing a woman who was to be Isaac's wife.

Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too' - let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. (Genesis 24:12-15)

Notice the phrase "Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came..."

That was an instant answer to prayer. No waiting period. How great it would be if God answered all our prayers like that. But many a time we have to wait. Yet, we should be always in the "expectant attitude."

He can answer you before you finish praying. Even today.

Jesus said,

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. (John 16:24)

So, let your prayers for immediate needs be with such faith that you expect God to do a miracle even while you are praying.

February 18

Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt? (2 Chronicles 13:5)

Holding on to the promises of God. That is of greatest importance in our lives. This chapter from the Bible concerns a war between Israel and Judah. Though they were one kingdom at the start, because of Solomon's disobedience, God partitioned the kingdom later on and different kings ruled Israel and Judah.

Here in this chapter, Abijah, grandson of Solomon is king of Judah and Jeroboam is king of Israel. Abijah and Jeroboam are at war. Jeroboam has an army of 8 lac soldiers and Abijah 4 lacs.

Despite the great difference in the strengths of the army, Abijah holds on to the promises of God and abides by the Law of Moses. Jeroboam meanwhile has instituted his own worship and priests.

Listen to what Abijah tells Jeroboam,

"And now you plan to resist the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods.

But didn't you drive out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and make priests of your own as the peoples of other lands do? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may become a priest of what are not gods. "As for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him. The priests who serve the LORD are sons of Aaron, and the Levites assist them. Every morning and evening they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD. They set out the bread on the ceremonially clean table and light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening. We are observing the requirements of the LORD our God. But you have forsaken him. God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. Men of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you will not succeed." (2 Chronicles 13:8-12)

Abijah was confident though his army was only half the size of Jeroboam. Notable are the statements- God is with us; he is our leader. Men of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you will not succeed.

Meanwhile Jeroboam had sent troops around to the rear, so that while he was in front of Judah, the ambush was behind them. Judah turned and saw that they were being attacked at both front and rear. Then they cried out to the LORD. The priests blew their trumpets and the men of Judah raised the battle cry. At the sound of their battle cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. The Israelites fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. There are Christians who are only name sake Christians. They are like Jeroboam. They have God's Word but don't live according to it. They have instituted their own ways of worship. They try to intimidate true believer's but they will never win because God will fight for his children like he did for Abijah in this war.

Are you holding onto the promises of God and living according to his Word? The enemy will not win. That's for sure.

February 19

'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former

house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty." (Haggai 2:9)

Though all believer's are called to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and his kingdom, some are called to the ministry. The 5 fold ministry as detailed in Ephesians Ch. 4 is this: It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11, 12)

So what's your calling? And what are you doing about it?

Among the people who returned from the Babylonian exile were Joshua the high priest, Zerubabel the governor and the prophet Haggai..

The Israelites and the above mentioned leaders set about building their own houses after coming back from Babylon. They ignored building the temple of the Lord. Then the Lord spoke through Haggai the prophet that they should build the temple first.

Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God, (Haggai 1:12, 14)

Are you going about your own business ignoring the Lord's calling upon your life? Give God precedence and it will bring about a great change in your life. You will not suffer what the Israelites who came back from the exile suffered. This was what God had to tell them: You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." (Haggai 1:6)

When they obeyed the voice of the Lord and started building the temple of the Lord, this was the promise that God gave them, 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty." (Haggai 2:9)

Zerubbabel, Joshua & Haggai obeyed God and did the Lord's bidding. Won't you?

February 20

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

The people of this world consider the rich and the famous as blessed. But that is not true blessedness. If your transgressions are forgiven and your sins are covered, you are truly blessed. A person in whom God does not find any deceit is truly blessed.

Look at Nathanael. Nathanael is another name for Barthelomew, one of Jesus' 12 disciples. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom

there is nothing false." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." (John 1:47, 48)

How great if Jesus can say that about each one of us. Jesus plainly said that he did not see any deceit in this man. How wonderful. Nathanael was stunned. How could this man who was seeing him for the first time declare this? Jesus told him that he had seen him meditating on God's Word sitting in the shade of the fig tree.

God sees and knows everything about us. He knows exactly how much guile there is in each one of us. We cannot hide anything from him.

The Apostle Peter exhorts believers in this manner:

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. (1 Peter 2:1)

Look at this verse from the Old Testament;

The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. (2 Kings 17:9)

Secretly...and that too against the Lord...How foolish. They were only deceiving themselves.

Let it not be so in our lives and may the Lord help each one of us to be without deceit in our spirit. That will bring us a state of true blessedness.

February 21

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. (Genesis 8:20, 21)

God's promise of not to destroy all living creatures again has stood the test of time and has been true to this day.

One family of 8 survived the flood because God found one man to be righteous in that generation. The Bible says, "Noah walked with God."

When everyone around is going astray don't take that as a clue that everything is lost. The Lord's eyes are on them whose hearts are committed to him.

The prophet Elijah thought that he was the only righteous man in all Israel. In his self righteous attitude he told God twice the following things:

"I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." (1 Kings 19:10)

God corrected him by telling him that:

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. (1 Kings 19:18)

Perhaps you may think that you are the only one left whose doctrines are all right. Good for you, but God has seen many more hearts that are living for him though their doctrines may not be perfect.

Come to think of it, all the 7 people in the ark besides Noah perhaps were not righteous as him, yet God did not forsake them. Your spouse or children or parents may not be as spiritual as you are, yet God doesn't condemn them. So have a heart that can accommodate those who are of the faith, but not as strong as you are.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. (Romans 15:1)

February 22

"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. (Isaiah 54:7)

Abandoned by all. Abandoned by God too. Whatever be the cause. It must have been a terrible experience. You must have wished to die but that too didn't happen. The pain and the gall. Job experienced it in his life. He lamented:

"Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say. Would he oppose me with great power? No, he would not press charges against me. There an upright man could present his case before him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge. "But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. (Job 23:2-10)

Experiencing the horrible torments in life, Job felt that God had abandoned him. Job wanted to argue with God. He wanted to know what God would answer him. The only problem was that he couldn't find God, neither in the east or in the west, nor in the north or in the south.

But God had not abandoned Job. He was always near; watching. Are you in a desperate situation these days? Perhaps you feel like God has abandoned you. Take heart.

God says, ""For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer. (Isaiah 54:7, 8)

Israel felt abandoned by God when they were punished for their sins. They despaired. But God restored them in his time. God will restore you too. Be strong and courageous.

February 23

They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of Lords and King of kings - and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." (Revelation 17:14)

The above is a prophecy regarding a future war between the Antichrist and his allies against Jesus. As John writes victory is sure because Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Jesus is always the victor.

Satan thought he was winning a great victory when he got some men inspired by him to crucify Jesus. Alas, that was his greatest mistake.

The Bible says,

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15)

When Satan thought Jesus was losing while being crucified, he himself actually was being crushed. The prophecy of Genesis Ch.3 was being fulfilled.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Regarding the Antichrist who will be Satan's chief weapon in the Tribulation period, the Bible says,

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

Finally will come the doom of Satan as is outlined in Revelation Ch. 20.

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

Praise God. Jesus is always the victor, now and forever. If you are a believer, here's a promise for you from Jesus himself:

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

February 24

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? (Luke 18:7)

Do you feel God will keep putting you off all the time? Do you feel that your prayers are not going to be answered? Now, wait a moment. Read the above promise.

God says he will answer you because he is a just God.

The situation that you are facing now has been faced by many believers who cried out in their distresses to the Lord. Here are a few testimonies and pleas:

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

My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:3)

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

The good news of course is that:

Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. (Psalm 126:5)

God says he will bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night.

When that happens, you can join in with the psalmist and say:

Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. (Psalm 116:7-9)

February 25

I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." (Mark 14:9)

The woman about whom this was said may not have believed this herself when Jesus said it, but it has been proved true. As Jesus said, many a time she has been the topic of discussion all over the world as it is in our devotional today.

The story went in this manner: While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. (Mark 14: 3-8)

She, in fact was expressing her love for this man who was the Savior of the world. It was an act of adoration. Notice, there were no words spoken between Jesus and her. Her faith in Jesus was being demonstrated in a very subtle manner.

What about our love for Jesus? Is it being demonstrated in a manner wherein the Lord is pleased?

The question that we have to ask ourselves is this: What's the motive behind all that we do for the Lord? Is it for personal glory or does everything ultimately lead to total glorification of the Lord?

Jesus knows how much we love him even though others may have no idea at all of how near/ how far we are to the Lord. Nothing is hidden from him.

Does the value of our actions equal to what this unknown woman did to Jesus? If yes, then what we have done and are doing has much worth in the Lord's eyes. It will be like a sweet smelling sacrifice in the eyes of the Lord. Even though you may be unknown while living here on earth, one day, Jesus will testify about you in the presence of the Father and the angels.

February 26

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Life can be depressing; living can often be tormenting; yet we live on; thanks to the God of hope, Jesus Christ.

Times can be confusing when one is suffering; what must be the cause? Is it sin? Is it Satan? Is it a new virus? The answers are often not easy to find. Yet the small and still voice of the God of hope instills peace inside us.

Jacob had a very traumatic experience when his sons cheated him by telling him that his loving son Joseph had been killed by a wild animal.

He lost all hope and lamented for several years after that.

Later during the famine Joseph insisted that the brothers bring Benjamin to Egypt while Simeon was held back. When Jacob heard this, he said,

"You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me." (Genesis 42:36)

"My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow." (Genesis 42:38)

Jacob thought everything was lost for him, yet the God of hope did a great miracle in his life. 22 years after he had last seen his beloved son, Jacob was reunited with Joseph.

Times can be depressing, life can be tormenting; yet the God of hope doesn't forget us. He says,

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you....." (Isaiah 66:13)

May you abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

February 27

"Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:39, 40)

We must always remember that God is able to do things beyond the limited thinking of our brains. He is El Shaddai, the Almighty God.

The Word of God is peppered with numerous instances of how this All Powerful God did great miracles for his children. He has not changed. He's the same yesterday, today and forever.

What Martha said was not untrue. Logically thinking, she did not want Jesus to make a spectacle of himself and also she wanted to prevent ignominy coming to her family. What she thought was "when Jesus couldn't do anything when my brother was alive, what could he possibly do now, that too after my brother's dead body has been in the cave for 4 days."

But the God of the Bible is one who split the Red Sea asunder, changed the bitter waters of Marah to sweet, tore apart the Jordan, gave manna to his children for around 40 years, destroyed enemies of Israel time and again, turned water into blood, turned water into wine, multiplied fish and loaves to feed multitudes, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers and did much much more and is even doing many things even today.

His work has not stopped. Jesus once said,

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." (John 5:17)

He is still able do great miracles. Can you believe that?

Jesus Christ who spoke to Martha and said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" is still working and he says the same to you this day.

Jesus raised up dead Lazarus and proved that he is truly the resurrection and the life.

Remember, nothing is too hard for your Almighty God. He said,
"I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? (Jeremiah 32:27)
You must believe... to see your miracle.

February 28

Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you, declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 41:14)

Have you ever felt insignificant? Not of much worth or any at all?
It happens sometimes to most believer's and to few believer's many a time. The title verse here speaks of worthlessness of Israel, God's own people. Jacob/Israel compared to a worm.

Bildad the Shuhite, one of Job's friends had this to say when Job suffered:
"Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven. Can his forces be numbered? Upon whom does his light not rise?
How then can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is but a maggot - a son of man, who is only a worm!" (Job 25:1-6)

...how much less man, who is but a maggot - a son of man, who is only a worm!.....

Because of multiple pressing circumstances in life, some believer's consider their condition as that of Israel spoken of by God here i.e. little or insignificant.

What's the worth of a worm? Nothing, so as to say, yet the title verse speaks as if God even has a compassionate heart to a person who thinks he/she has no worth at all.

Israel lost all it's glory because of sins. They were in a hopeless situation; of little worth. Yet the Lord did not forsake them. He promised to help them.

And he will help you too. The Bible says,
He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

Always remember that you are in the safe arms of God Almighty even though you are passing through a troublesome period in your life.

He says,

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

March 1

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13:43)

Jesus stated this after telling his hearers a parable; in fact he spoke a series of parables on this occasion as he sat in a boat and the crowds stood on the shore. The parable that ended with the above statement was this:

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

"'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'" (Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus later explained the parable to his disciples:

"The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:37-42)

Jesus ended by saying...Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

No one can take away the honor that will be bestowed on the righteous in the end. The Bible says,

But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. (Malachi 4:2)

Shall we then wait for God's promises to be fulfilled?
May the Holy Spirit help us all.

March 2

**For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.
(Psalm 48:14)**

I guess one could not ask for a better guide in this earthly sojourn. But God does not guide anyone unless they choose to have a personal relationship with him.

Does he appear to be distant from you though you pray, sing and worship him? Try having a personal relationship with him like Father & Son or Father & Daughter.

The Bible says,

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - (John 1:12)

As a child of God you have the privilege to ask him to guide you in every aspect of your life. You will be guided by the Holy Spirit who is always in you and with you after you become a child of God.

After liberating the Israelites from Egyptian bondage God Almighty chose to be with them. The Bible says,

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. (Exodus 13:21)

The same thing is mentioned in the book of Nehemiah:

"Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. (Nehemiah 9:19)

God has great compassion on you because you are his child. Whenever you call out "Father", he is there to hear you.

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15)

The psalmist Asaph sums up this matter in a wonderful way:

Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. (Psalm 73:23, 24)

Yes; we too as children of God can emphatically say,

For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end. (Psalm 48:14)

March 3

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

Do you believe that? I mean the part of the verse above that says,

..."for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked."

All those escapes from accidents and sicknesses and terrifying situations. Do you think they all happened by chance?

Even when you did not know Christ, yet because you were chosen to be a part of his kingdom, God protected you. What's the proof? you may ask.

Here is something that the Lord had to say to King Cyrus who was a Gentile king, that of Persia.

"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:1-6)

Notice these words...For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though

you have not acknowledged me....

Twice God says....though you do not acknowledge me...

You must remember that even when you had not acknowledged God, he was there to protect you and deliver you from the wicked one because you were chosen by him to be a part of his kingdom. Now that you have acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Savior, his promises have great value in your life. Hold on to his promises.

The Lord has this to say to you today:
Be strong and courageous....(Joshua 1:6,7,9)

March 4

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

Do you believe that Jesus is with you, to be specific, near you, as you read this devotional? You can't see him yet you believe he is with you? Wonderful! Jesus says you are blessed if you believe that.

Many a time, we feel Jesus is so very far away especially when we are suffering. We feel he doesn't seem to care even though we pray with faith. He just keeps quiet. We often wonder why he does that.

His divine purposes are often difficult to understand. But his assurance is that he is with us, that's why one of his names is "Immanuel" meaning God with us.

So what's the agenda of sleeping calmly in the boat when his disciples' knees are knocking because of a furious storm? Or that special appearance walking on the waters, one dark and windy night when his disciples had lost all hopes and were seeing ghosts?

Why can't life be easy? The disciples must have thought sometimes. But perhaps they did not then comprehend that he was shaping them up for greater things.

Moses was put in God's school of training for quite a while- around 40 years and just when he thought that life was all settled- good wife, 2 boys, good father-in-law, lot of sheep...God thought it was time for a new job for Moses. The hottest job in the Middle East, so as to say...and Moses didn't want it... But God had his way..

He's going to lead you through some wonderful ways. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised....You believe in him though you do not see him..you believe his Words; Jesus says "You are blessed."

March 5

Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared. (Proverbs 3:25,26)

What's our confidence? The things that we boast about is where our confidence lies. People of the world boast about things of the world. But what about the believer? The Apostle Paul

has a few things to say to us regarding this:

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

And if the Lord is our confidence, the promise given above is for us. The promise exhorts us not to fear sudden disaster or the ruin that overtakes the wicked. The Lord will keep our foot from being snared.

Psalms 91 and 124 speak of the fowler's snare:

Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. (Psalm 91:3)

We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. (Psalm 124:7)

Psalm 91:3 speaks of how God saves those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High and Psalm 124:7 speaks of deliverance for the one on whose side the Lord is.

If your confidence is in the Lord, he will save and deliver you too.

March 6

The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." (Judges 7:7)

7th book of the Bible, 7th Chapter, 7th verse...Wonderful Promise to Gideon.

The size of the armies of the enemy was astounding:

The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. (Judges 7:12)

Gideon set out with 32,000 men to fight the Midianites and the Amalekites. God told Gideon to ask all who were fearful to go home. 22,000 went back, 10,000 were left. Perhaps Gideon was satisfied that at least 10,000 were left to fight against the enemy. But God had other plans. He told Gideon,

"There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. (Judges 7:4-6)

And then came the promise--With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands.

300 against a vast army. No, not 300. 300+ God Almighty. And then immediately the ratios change. 300 becomes 300+ omnipotence. And no kind of permutations and combinations of the enemy can stand against the army of God.

Do you feel that your strength is little while fighting the evil forces arrayed against you? Remember that Jesus is with you. He's the one who disarmed the powers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15)

300+ God Almighty proved to be too much for the Midianites and Amalekites. God gave a great victory to Gideon and the Israelites.

You, as a child of God are not alone in your war against satanic foes. It's (you+ God Almighty) against satan. So the battle becomes the Lord's and the victory is yours.

March 7

By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. (1 Corinthians 6:14)

As one reads of Apostle Paul making this statement, it is evident that he is convinced of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and also that those who believe in the sin-atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and live according to God's Word will likewise be resurrected by the power of God.

What wonderful hope that instills in the life of a believer in Jesus Christ!

With so many daunting problems to be faced each day while living in this world, the Word of God brings hope and assurance for them who believe in the Lord.

The Bible says,

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. (2 Corinthians 5:1)

The fleshly body will see decay some day when the blood stops flowing, the breath is no more taken and someone declares 'one' brain dead. Yet, the spirit and soul live on and for the believer there's a promise that will be fulfilled- they will receive an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

The Bible says,

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6)

What a blessed hope.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Peter 1:3)

March 8

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27, 28)

The writer of Hebrews talks about the return of Jesus Christ in this very wonderful passage where he also speaks of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Interestingly the point that stands out here is that Christ is coming back for those who are waiting for him. Immediately the question arises of whether the dead are also waiting for him. In fact they are; and the following verses attest to this fact.

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. (John 5:28, 29)

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

He is coming to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Are you waiting for him?

The Bible says,

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. (James 5:7)

You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. (James 5:8)

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:9)

Are you waiting for him? Blessed are you if you are.

March 9

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

So many things happened without Jeremiah even realizing it. He was known by God before he was formed in the womb, he was set apart by God before he was born and he was appointed by God as a prophet to the nations.

Jeremiah was one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Here the Lord was calling him to begin his prophetic ministry to the Israelites. He replied to the call in this manner: "Ah, Sovereign LORD," "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." (Jeremiah 1:6)

There's always a tendency for us to judge us by ourselves. How good we are or how capable we are. Jeremiah did not know what the Lord actually wanted of him, so he replied in that manner. But we must remember that when God calls one to the ministry to do his work of proclaiming the Gospel, he is the one who equips us for the task.

Thus the Lord replied,

"Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:7-10)

Jeremiah prophesied to the Israelites at a stage when they were living in rebellion to the Lord. He prophesied judgement and destruction and deportation. He was not popular because people did not want to hear about impending judgement and destruction. That's why he had to suffer at the hands of his fellow men. Yet he was faithful to the Lord who had called him to the prophetic ministry.

God expects us to be faithful to his call and do the work that he has entrusted us with. Whether people listen to us or not is not the issue we have to be unduly worried about. It's whether we are faithful.

When God called another priest Ezekiel to the prophetic ministry, he told him one thing very clearly:

You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. (Ezekiel 2:7)

Let us then, who have been called by him to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ be faithful to him.

March 10

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. (Isaiah 42:16)

Another wonderful promise from the book of Isaiah. The Israelites were not literally blind yet their living demonstrated their blindness. Here God promises them to lead them by ways they have not known. But why does God want to lead them by ways they have not known?

Long back God answered this question through Moses when he led the Israelites through the wilderness to Canaan. He said,

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 8:2,3)

The Lord again warned them through Moses,

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then

your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Deuteronomy 8: 10-14)

Sadly, people tend to forget the Lord after they get what they desire through prayer. There are others on whom the Lord has shown mercy countless times, yet they never thank him or even acknowledge him. But that should not be our attitude. The Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of worship because he paid the price for our sins and unrighteousness on the cross. He purchased eternal salvation for us and thus he is worthy of praise.

As the Bible says,

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:12)

March 11

You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall and like the heat of the desert. You silence the uproar of foreigners; as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is stilled. (Isaiah 25:4, 5)

Notice the part of verse 4 which says- For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall and like the heat of the desert.

The psalmist cried out in despair:

Help, LORD, for the godly are no more; the faithful have vanished from among men. Everyone lies to his neighbor; their flattering lips speak with deception. (Psalm 12: 1, 2)

We are hurt the most when people speak sweetly when we are face to face with them and then when our backs are turned, they stab us with their words and actions. And sometimes this is done by people whom we have loved from our hearts.

David once made a complain regarding this to the Lord:

They repay me evil for good and leave my soul forlorn. Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother. But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee; attackers gathered against me when I was unaware. They slandered me without ceasing. Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked ; they gnashed their teeth at me. O Lord, how long will you look on? Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from these lions. (Psalm 35: 12-17)

Sadly this is true in the life of many a believer.

But then the promise says,

God is a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.

Yes, the Lord is mighty to calm the storms of your life. He loves you and he will still the storms that ravage your life. Remember his promise,

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. (Jeremiah 31: 3)

March 12

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. (Psalm 34:8)

David, the psalmist was quite convinced about what he had tasted. He had tasted the goodness of the Lord and is exhorting others to do the same. He sang this song after he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away.

He had tasted that the Lord was good regarding two major matters which he details: I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:4) This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. (Psalm 34:6)

Deliverance from fears and troubles.

That's what we all desire in our lives. And regarding this most of us have tasted that the Lord is good. Time and again we have seen the faithfulness of the Lord come true regarding several issues.

This was not the last time that David had to go through problematic situations. Far from it. Yet he found that his continual trust in the Lord Almighty brought him into a state of blessedness. That's why he says, Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

You and me, we can (some have) repeatedly taste and see that the Lord is good; amidst worries, sicknesses, financial crisis, failures, back-slidings and a whole lot of imaginable and unimaginable situations.

The verse that lies sandwiched between the 2 deliverance verses (34:4,6) is an affirmation of David's faith in God Almighty. He says, Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. (Psalm 34:5)

I guess we too can say that with him.

March 13

The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him. (Psalm 34:22)

"No one will be condemned who takes refuge in him."

A similar promise is found in Romans Ch.8. It says, Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1, 2)

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? Are you in Christ Jesus?

Do you feel that you are being condemned by people? Or is the devil using people to condemn you? Don't fall for that trick. Stand firm, rooted in the Word of God.

The Bible says,

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. (Romans 8:33, 34)

The Bible also exhorts us saying,

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31, 32)

Are people belittling the salvation that you have through Jesus Christ? Satan is jealous of the honor that you have in the presence of God as his child. He was jealous of the blessings that God bestowed upon Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. That's why he plotted against them and made them fall.

God has given you the Holy Spirit who will guide you in all the truth. Be led by the Spirit of God each day. That alone will keep you victorious against your enemy, the devil.

Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

March 14

Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (John 1:50, 51)

Nathanael is promised here by Jesus that he was going to witness greater miracles than what he now thought was a miracle. He was astounded at the comments Jesus made regarding him although it was the first time that they were meeting.

....."Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." (John 1:47)

....."I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." (John 1:48)

Jesus was telling him that he was going to witness greater things after becoming a disciple. Jesus also promises him here that he was going to witness the resurrection and the ministry of angels to Jesus.

Many people come to Christ after they witness a miracle from the Lord in their lives. It may be a small miracle or a great one that brings about a life changing experience. The promise given to Nathanael was fulfilled as he witnessed miracle after miracle being done by Jesus and he was witness to the resurrection too as were the other 10 disciples.

The writer of Hebrews says,

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)

As we keep trusting the Lord amidst the numerous troubles in our lives, we can see the Lord doing greater miracles than what we witnessed before. As our faith in the Lord increases we can see the Lord's miraculous deliverances in our lives.

The Bible says,

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must

believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

March 15

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

Sometimes believer's tend to think that it's because of their faithfulness that the Lord is blessing them. In one way, this may account for several blessings but if we realize the utter helplessness of man without God, we would be able to affirm what Jeremiah says in the verses given above.

It's God's love for us that keeps us going amidst life's uncertainties. If you are the only one in your family who has acknowledged salvation through Jesus, how great a responsibility lies on your shoulders. It's like you holding an umbrella in incessant rain and all your family members are sheltered under this umbrella that you hold. In such a situation, it's your prayers that are so very important for the others. Your pleading for them to acknowledge Christ may fall on deaf ears yet they may be escaping from dangerous situations in their lives because of your prayers. They may never realize that or realizing they may ignore it. And the futility of it all can make one despair.

Jeremiah understood life's vagaries firsthand and thus strengthened himself while lamenting for Israel. His prophesies fell on deaf ears and he was often frustrated by the hatred and torture that he had to face.

When Jerusalem was destroyed and the people went into exile, the prophet lamented the downfall and penned his thoughts in this book called Lamentations.

Yet he found solace when he thought of the Lord's faithfulness amidst all these calamities and thus he writes,

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

May the Holy Spirit help us to meditate on the faithfulness of God and be strengthened amidst situations in our lives where things don't seem to be progressing as we wish it had. Remember, his compassions never fail, they are new every morning.

March 16

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3:20,21)

I like the part of the above verse which says, "power that enables him to bring everything under his control."

Power and Control are 2 inseparable words. People often have a feeling that the amount of power a person has is directly proportional to the control that person can exert. Of course in human terms there are limitations. But the above verses say that Jesus has the power

to bring everything under his control. That means he is All Powerful. No wonder he is called the King Of Kings and Lord Of Lords.

And when we entrust our life with it's problems to Jesus who is All Powerful, we can have peace and joy at all times. That doesn't mean we won't feel hurt or we won't grieve, but it means that we will have peace and joy that is able to overcome the hurts and griefs. That peace and joy comes from Jesus. He says,
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

In Psalms 121, the psalmist exudes confidence regarding his faith in the All Powerful God. He says,
I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip - he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you - the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm - he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:1-8)

Nice psalm to read aloud. Give it a try. It'll boost your faith. Remember, you serve an All Powerful God. Everything is under his control.

March 17

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. (Isaiah 42:3)

The Old Testament saint Job yearned to die while undergoing bodily and mental torture at the hands of satan, but he couldn't and wouldn't die because God had already planned to bless him after the period of suffering. Job couldn't stand the torture anymore and complained bitterly. Everyday that he lived was agony personified. His friends accused him, his body was sore and his mind was in utter confusion. He wanted to argue with God regarding his condition but couldn't find him amidst his chaos.

He accused God of many things.

"If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas - no wonder my words have been impetuous. The arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their poison; God's terrors are marshaled against me. (Job 6:2-4)

He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. (Job 23:14)

His threshold of bearing insults and sufferings were reaching it's zenith. And when he thought the torture saga would never end, suddenly everything changed. Was it a dream? Was he seeing visions? No it was reality. His health, his friends, his family, his livestock and a lot more just came back to him in a new way. It just happened. The Lord Almighty opened a new chapter in his life, a chapter that lasted 140 years. He saw his children and their children to the fourth generation.

And the Bible ends his story by saying,
And so he died, old and full of years. (Job 42:17)

There's hope for you and me...because (as Job said amidst his sufferings).... My Redeemer lives.

March 18

Then the word of the LORD came to him: "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." (1 Kings 17:9)

Faith life can be exciting and intriguing at times. Earlier God had directed Elijah to the Kerith Ravine and told that he would be fed by ravens; the water from the brook there would quench his thirst. The quencher (brook) finally got quenched and God gave him new directions of which we read in the title verses.

Interestingly God didn't specify which widow in Zarephath he was to meet. The address was not complete yet Elijah went nevertheless in unquestioning obedience. And the Bible says, When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" (1 Kings 17:10)

Jesus once said,

I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. (Luke 4:25, 26)

It was not just coincidence that Elijah had come to the right address, God had guided his steps. Yes, God does that for his children. The Bible says, Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. (Psalm 25:12)

Elijah first asked the widow for a drink and then for a piece of bread. A drink of water she could afford to give, but the bread was the last one she could make from what flour and oil she had left so that she and her son could have a last meal together before they died.

Then came the prophesy and promise from God that changed her life.

Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'" (1 Kings 17:13,14)

She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah. (1 Kings 17:15, 16)

When there is famine in the land, God will feed his children. He is faithful. Hope in him. The God of Elijah is your God too. The God who did a great miracle in the home of the widow of Zarephath is your God too. Trust in him.

March 19

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:23- 25)

How wonderful a promise! It says that Jesus, the permanent high priest, always lives to intercede for everyone who comes to God through him. Even when there is no one praying and interceding for you, Jesus is, because you are invaluable to him. When you are ill and tired and weary and can't pray, Jesus is interceding for you. When you are in mental agony and cannot bring words in your heart and mouth as prayer, Jesus is interceding for you. Can you believe that?

The Bible says,
Such a high priest meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. (Hebrews 7:26)

Jesus is the perfect intercessor. A human intercessor may have faults and sins in his life which may be a hindrance to his prayer being answered, but here is someone who is holy, blameless and pure; whose prayer God will surely answer. He is set apart from sinners and exalted above the heavens.

Not only Jesus, but even the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in the presence of the father. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. (Romans 8:26)

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:27)

The next time when you feel that you are all alone and that there is no one to pray and intercede for you, remember these promises. Jesus, the permanent high priest and the Counselor, the Holy Spirit are always there, continually interceding for you in the presence of the Father.

March 20

Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest. (Proverbs 26:2)

Balak, the king of Moab, recruited Balaam to curse the Israelites while they travelled to the promised land of Canaan. But God would not allow Balaam to curse Israel. Whenever Balaam opened his mouth, God made him proclaim blessings rather than curses. Balaam spoke of why the Israelites couldn't be cursed. During those days, the Israelites lived a life of obedience to God and his laws. Balaam said,
He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. (Numbers 23:21)

Living a life of obedience to God and his laws was their strength during those days; so no one could destroy them. But later on instead of cursing Israel, Balaam led them into sin as we read in the book of Revelation.

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine

of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. (Revelation 2:14)

This led to their downfall and many calamities befell them.

Sin in our lives opens up ways for evil forces to attack and subdue us.

As a child of God you do not have to fear when wicked people curse you, provided you are living close to God and obeying his Word. They may pronounce calamities upon your life while cursing you but none of those will happen to you because you are protected by God. The blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ is your protection.

Because Jesus loves you, he will turn curses into blessings as he did for Israel when they lived close to him as is said in this verse.

However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. (Deuteronomy 23:5)

March 21

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

Spiritually and physically, most of us grow weary and weak at one time or the other. It just happens, even to them who live very close to the Lord. Moses was a man who spent much time in the presence of the Lord. God spoke to him like a man speaks to his friend. Twice he fasted and prayed for 40 days and was continually in God's presence during those days. Yet there were times when Moses became weak and weary. Perhaps the burdens on his life were too great and he snapped under the pressure of it all. It happens to most of us. And does God understand? Yes, he does.

The Bible says,

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:13, 14)

Yes...he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

We need to continually lean on the Lord for he is the fountain of strength, both spiritual and physical. The verses following the title verse here say,

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30, 31)

Are you feeling weak spiritually or physically these days? God doesn't condemn you for not being spiritually strong like you were before. He understands the bodily pain and weakness that you suffer. God will renew your strength. He will build you up with the Holy Spirit. You will soar on wings like eagles and that will bring glory to him.

Always remember...He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

March 22

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

Being pure in heart goes beyond having the right doctrines and attending the right churches. Purity in thought, word and deed at all times is a difficult standard to achieve and there's always another lesson to be learnt and another chapter to be explored as long as we live here on earth.

Regarding human purity, Eliphaz the Temanite, one of Job's friends had this to say, "What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water! (Job 15:14-16)

And another friend of Job, Bildad the Shuhite shared his thoughts: How then can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is but a maggot - a son of man, who is only a worm!" (Job 25:4-6)

What the friends of Job said was true but they chose the wrong occasion and the wrong person to whom to say that to. The knowledgeable friends of Job tried to put down a man of whom God himself had testified to satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." (Job 1:8)

Maintaining high standards of purity is the call from Jesus to all his children. How much each one of us achieves that is known only to the person concerned and the Lord himself.

The reward for being pure is one of the greatest...and something the world cannot give...Jesus said, "They will see God." Hope you and I get that reward.

March 23

Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. (Genesis 18:10)

That God would bless him with descendants was a promise that Abraham had heard many times from the Lord. But now there was something specific in the promise. Not a difficult to imagine promise like- "Look up at the heavens and count the stars - if indeed you can count them. So shall your offspring be" but something more concrete. God Almighty was promising to return the next year and give the long awaited blessing of a child of their own to Abraham and Sarah.

Does the Lord deal in specifics? is the question many a believer asks. Yes, he does; is the answer. But one may have to wait at his feet in prayer for a while often. A couple of clear examples of how the Lord speaks in minute detail is found in the following passages:

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." (Acts 9:9-12)

One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." (Acts 10:3-6)

Not much difficulty in finding those addresses. The Lord has answers and solutions for all the problems that we face while we live here on earth and he has given us (believer's) the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to guide us in the right path.

Regarding the Holy Spirit, Jesus said,
But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:13-15)

Coming back to the promise that God gave Abraham as we read in the title verse. As God said, so he did. That's what we read in Genesis Ch.21. Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. (Genesis 21:1,2)

You and I, we serve a God who keeps his word. All glory be to him.

March 24

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:3,4)

When we give to the needy and make proclamations about it, we receive the kudos and applause from men. That becomes our reward.

Jesus said,

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. (Matthew 6:1, 2)

But when we do acts of charity secretly without others knowing about it, our heavenly Father seeing what we did in secret will reward us according to the richness of his grace. Definitely, the rewards that come from heaven are much greater than what men can ever give.

Perhaps no one may know what we are doing and no one may acknowledge us openly in that respect, but everything is noted down by heaven in secret.

Not that we can receive salvation by doing good in secret, as some other religions believe; we are saved by Jesus Christ to do good works.

Paul exhorted the Galatian believer's in this manner:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:9,10)

Greater rewards await us as we (believers) wait patiently doing good in the name of Jesus. The great promise made by the Lord regarding his return still awaits completion and every believer must look forward to that glorious day when the Savior fulfills this promise of his: "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:12)

March 25

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, `Work a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, `Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.' " (Exodus 7:8, 9)

Moses and Aaron had obeyed the command of the Lord and had spoken to Pharaoh to release the Israelites. But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2) Moses and Aaron pleaded with Pharaoh, but instead of releasing the Israelites, he made them work more harder and stopped providing them with straw to make bricks. Their foremen were beaten. The foremen in turn poured out their anger on Moses and Aaron by blaming them for this sudden worsening of their working conditions. Moses was discouraged and complained to the Lord, "O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? "Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all." (Exodus 5:22, 23)

God again commanded Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh. He promised to do a miracle. When Aaron threw his staff down in the presence of Pharaoh, it would become a serpent. And that is exactly what happened. But other things happened that God had not revealed to Moses and Aaron. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. (Exodus 7:11)

Each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. That really must have startled the brothers Moses and Aaron. Something that God did not reveal to them. For a moment they must have wondered what was happening, whether God Almighty was in control, but soon their doubts were cleared when they saw the power of God manifested in front of them. The Bible says, Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. (Exodus 7:12)

Moses and Aaron must have immediately realized that the power that they had with them was greater than the power that the magicians and Pharaoh had.

The Bible says,

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

John the Apostle here is speaking of the spirit of the Antichrist that is in the world. No

doubt like the magicians of Egypt, the satanic spirits have power but there is a far greater and higher power in you and me who have accepted Jesus and Christ.

Like Aaron's staff could swallow the staffs of the magicians, the power of the Holy Spirit in every believer overcomes the power of the the evil one who is in the world.

Always remember, the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. So do not fear.

March 26

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

Wonderful promise from Jesus to the disciples after giving them orders to fulfill the Great Commission. This promise holds true not only for them but for every disciple of Jesus Christ. There's nothing too hard to understand these words of Jesus. Plain and simple- He says, he's with us at all times. But what's the point of Jesus being with us and him not doing anything when we are in trouble? Can that happen? The disciples once thought so. This is what really happened,

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" (Mark 4: 35-38)

In short, the disciples were hinting- What's the point of you being with us if you are not doing anything to save us?

Sometimes we may feel like what the disciples felt when they were drowning despite Jesus being with them. Have you ever cried out like the disciples did-- Wake up Jesus, wake up..don't you care if I/We....whatever??

But Jesus is in control at all times. He knows every detail about the storms in our lives. We may feel we are drowning, but his everlasting arms are beneath us holding us and ours safe at all times.

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Mark 4: 39)

Another great miracle...and the disciples were awestruck...They exclaimed, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4: 41)

So be strengthened this day, dear brother/dear sister; he is with us at all times according to his promise, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

March 27

He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend. (Proverbs 22:11)

If you are a child of God with the qualities described above, you will have the King of

Kings, Jesus, as your friend.

The Psalmist explains who all can be in fellowship with God after asking the question himself. Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior. (Psalm 24:3-5)

Once Jesus told his disciples:

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:14, 15)

What's this "master's business" that Jesus is talking about? The master's business is doing the will of God. For the disciples and for us it means being a true witness for Jesus Christ and bearing fruit that will last. That's what Jesus told his disciples:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. (John 15:16)

If you are fulfilling the commands of Jesus to be a witness for the kingdom of God and bearing fruit that lasts, you have Jesus as your friend.

What better friend can one have? A friend who is always with us; helping, saving, healing, delivering, nurturing, pacifying and consoling.

No one else can do all this other than the Lord Almighty, Everlasting Father & Prince of Peace. Is he your friend? If not, make him your friend by living a life pleasing to him obeying the Word of God.

March 28

Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed." (Isaiah 49:23)

The Bible says,

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:5)

Abraham, called by God at around age 75, whilst living among moon worshippers was promised by God of many things of which one was: "To your offspring I will give this land." He did not see an offspring of his for the next 10 years and when he did, it was through his Egyptian maidservant turned wife Hagar. That was not the offspring of promise through his wife Sarah.

This must have been a good cause for disappointment and discouragement to Abraham. Yet the Bible says,

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,

being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:18-21)

Abraham,

1. Against all hope, in hope believed
2. Did not weaken in his faith
3. Did not waver through unbelief
4. Was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God

The waiting must have been a torture, but God rewarded him finally.

Much for us to learn.

In the promise for today, God says,
"Those who hope in me will not be disappointed."
Hope against hope and you will see a miracle.

March 29

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

Travelling through Samaria, Jesus came to a town called Sychar. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The woman was perplexed and remarked, "You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

The Samaritan woman had a life changing experience speaking to the Author of salvation. She saw a new well and new waters. And she wanted to drink of it.

The Bible says,

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. (Isaiah 55:1, 2)

What a wonderful promise.

Are you drawing waters joyfully from the wells of salvation?

If you are, blessed are you.

If you have still not experienced this wonderful blessing, Jesus invites you today. He says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Will you accept his invitation?

March 30

**God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)
(NIV)**

This verse ends uniquely in several Bible translations:

...well-proved help in trouble--Amplified Bible
...very much found to be a help in distresses--Green's Literal Translation
...a helper who is always found in times of trouble--Christian Std. Bible
...always ready to help in times of trouble--New Living Translation
...a very present help in trouble--KJV

And all of it is true to the hilt.

Well-proved help (as the Amplified Bible put it) seems to be quite appropriate because Jesus proves time and again that he is truly our Savior and in fact has saved us from what would otherwise have been death or destruction.

Is he a very much found to be a help in distresses (as the Green's Literal Translation says)? Yes he is and he does not go back on the promise in his Word-I will never leave you nor forsake you.

What about the phrase used in the Christian Std. Bible?

...a helper who is always found in times of trouble.
People; even our near and dear ones may seem helpless, but Jesus does help like only he can.

The New Living translation says-- God is always ready to help in times of trouble. Friends may find faults and hold back their helping hand, but Jesus never fails us.

Like the Christian Std. Bible, the NIV also mentions God to be an ever-present help, meaning that he is always there with us from the beginning of the trouble to the end of it.

And the original KJV says that God is a very present help in trouble--If the question is-- who comes to the scene first? when a child of God falls into trouble....The answer is clear. It's their Savior, Jesus Christ.

March 31

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

The promise was of the Holy Spirit and the disciples waited as Jesus asked them to. The Bible says,

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Acts 1:14)

They didn't know what exactly was going to happen, but they must have remembered

Jesus' words...clothed with power from on high.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1-4)

This was not the only occasion when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts cites several occasions where the disciples experienced what Jesus had promised them--being clothed with power from on high.

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Acts 4:31)

Have you experienced the power of Pentecost in your life as the disciples did? The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy exhorted him saying, For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Power, love & self-discipline. Can you identify yourself with that? The presence of the Holy Spirit in you will bring godly power, love that is godly and self-control.

Our Savior, before his ascension, told his disciples: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Is the power of the Holy Spirit upon your life? Are you able to witness strongly? Can you speak the Word of God boldly as the disciples did when they were filled with the Holy Spirit? If you are lacking the power, the remedy is simple. Ask..., Jesus said and you will receive. He also said,

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13)

Ask...Seek...Knock....Be clothed with power from on high. The power of Pentecost is for you too.

April 1

The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." (Genesis 16:12)

Ultrasound scanning machines of this age sometimes do predict wrongly the sex of a child in the womb. Back in the good old days when there were no such machines around, heaven prophesied that Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant turned wife of Abraham would deliver a baby boy who would be called Ishmael and that when he grew up he would be a wild donkey of a man. Prophecy the sex, name and ability of the one to be born and be perfect in the outcome of all the things prophesied. Isn't that wonderful?

Hagar had received these prophecies from heaven and later God had promised Abraham to bless this son of his.

And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. (Genesis 17:20)

Yet some years later Ishmael was on the verge of death being expelled from home with his mother and in the wilderness without food and water.

Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob. (Genesis 21:16)

But God does not forget the promises he makes; neither does he need help from others to fulfill it. So we find an angel helping Hagar out.

God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. (Genesis 21:17-20)

Still later, the Bible gives an account of the progeny of Ishmael.

These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers according to their settlements and camps. (Genesis 25:13-16)

What God promised Hagar & Abraham, he fulfilled at the right time. He will fulfill what he has promised you too. Trust in him.

April 2

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14)

Sometimes it's so difficult to forgive; especially when the wound is deep in the spirit. The physical pain or the mental agony or both endured can bring bitterness, rage and an attitude of vengeance and this can last for years. There are many who justify the keeping of such feelings but the Bible advocates forgiveness.

The extent to which a person can forgive the offender varies and in the case of believer's it depends on spiritual maturity.

Bitterness, rage and a vengeful attitude caused by an unforgiving attitude can often bring about bodily sickness to the one having it.

The Biblical viewpoint regarding forgiveness is clear. For God to forgive our sins, we must forgive the sins that others commit against us.

Once Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. (Matthew 18:21, 22)

Jesus also said, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." (Mark 11:25)

And how must the forgiveness be? Often we may forgive others with our words, yet we may hold a grudge against them.

Jesus warned his disciples regarding such an attitude saying, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:35)

So forgiveness that God expects is that which comes from the heart. Difficult yet possible because God has given the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Jesus.

And may God give us the spiritual strength needed to have a forgiving attitude at all times.

April 3

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Needs are basic human requirements. People need food, air, water, clothing, and shelter to survive. Basic amenities in the household are also needs. Education is another need, so also some basic means of travel. The above needs become wants when they are directed to specific things that might satisfy the need. A person who needs good and clean food for maintaining his/her health may desire rich and costly foods which may not really bring him/her benefits. He can survive with other food but this is what he wants. Excesses are wants for specific things that we don't actually need but may only enhance our lifestyle.

In the verse that we read above, the Apostle Paul says that God will meet all our needs. Doesn't mean that God will give us the latest and fastest cars or the most posh apartments in town. Of course he may give us that if he so chooses but the promise is for providing all our needs.

There are many who preach and stress that God gives the best if you do this or that, but that hardly lines up with the Word of God.

Jesus even exhorted his disciples to seek first the kingdom of God and therein their needs would be met.

God knows our needs. He is a loving father. He will not withhold anything that is needed by us in our life. He cares for us since we have put our trust in him. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he said, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matthew 6:7,8)

Yes, God the Father knows what you need before you ask him. One of the simple requests in this prayer as taught by Jesus was: "Give us today our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11)

Any other need can be similarly prayed for and met. Could it be so simple? Yes it can be, if we truly consider God as our Father.

April 4

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

The phrases used by Apostle Paul in the above verse are excellent...all grace abound to you, in all things..., at all times..., having all that you need..., you will abound...

It all starts with "And God is able to make all grace abound to you."

But Paul's exhortation regarding "giving" by the believers in the Church at Corinth is found in this chapter just before the verse given above. He told them:

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6, 7)

The sowing principle is stressed upon here. It does not mention tithing but emphasizes the fact that God loves and rewards a cheerful giver. The heart attitude is important.

Give to whom? Paul lauded the Corinthian believers for their eagerness to give to all- God's servants, needy believers and generally others in need.

For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. (2 Corinthians 9:2)

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. (2 Corinthians 9:13)

Giving does not begin or end with tithing. Each man/woman should give what he/she has decided in his heart to give.

Giving not only refreshes the hearts of the needy, but as Paul mentions later in the chapter....This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. (2 Corinthians 9:12)

Our giving with a cheerful heart also overflows in many expressions of thanks to God. God in fact gave us his greatest gift Jesus for whom the Apostle gives thanks to God as he ends the chapter saying:

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Let's not forget then that...God is able to make all grace abound to us, so that in all things at all times, having all that we need, we will abound in every good work.

April 5

Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed." (2 Kings 5:10)

This was the prophetic promise given to Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram when he had come seeking for a cure for his leprosy from the man of God Elisha.

Elisha did not come out to meet Naaman but had only sent a servant to give him the message. Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage. (2 Kings 5: 11, 12)

Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. (2 Kings 5:13, 14)

Obedience brought him healing and deliverance and he returned to his country a happy man.

To a disobedient king of Israel (Saul), God had this to say through Samuel the prophet: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. (1 Samuel 15:22)

The Apostle Peter exhorts us regarding obedience in his epistle: As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. (1 Peter 1:14)

God expects us to be obedient to his Word at all times. God delights in our obedience and his blessings rest upon us when we live in obedience to him.

April 6

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

Our human body ages after every day that we spend on earth. Sickness makes the body weaker as we get older and finally the time comes when the natural body becomes aged enough to be sown. Some natural bodies are untimely sown too. Sown natural, sown in weakness, sown in dishonor and sown perishable.

But the difference is marked with the sown natural body of an unbeliever and that of a believer in Jesus Christ. An unbeliever's body is raised spiritual and imperishable but neither in power nor in glory. The believer's body as Paul says here is raised up spiritual, imperishable, in glory and in power.

That was how Jesus was raised up. He is the "first fruits" of the resurrection. He was raised up spiritual, imperishable, in glory and in power.

Here's a part from the gospel of Luke where Jesus appeared to his disciples after the resurrection....raised up spiritual, imperishable, in glory and in power.

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:36- 43)

And the Bible says,

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. (Romans 8:11)

That's the blessed hope for every believer.

April 7

This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 37:5,6)

"The valley of the bones" is an exciting part of this major prophetic book, "Ezekiel." This prophetic vision about the re-strengthening of the Israelites then in exile, gives hope for everyone who is in a state that the Israelites found themselves in- dejection, forsaken and on the verge of annihilation.

In the vision, the Spirit of the Lord takes the prophet into the midst of a valley full of dead bones and asks him a question, "Son of man, can these bones live?" to which the prophet replied, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." Then came the command from the Lord for Ezekiel to prophesy to the dead bones.

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'" (Ezekiel 37:4-6)

And as he prophesied to the bones, something miraculous happened.

There was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them. But they were still not alive. There was no breath in them. Then came the second command from the Lord for Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath to enter these slain.

And as he prophesied there took place another great miracle.

Breath from the four winds entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet - a vast army. The Lord explained the vision to the prophet saying, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you

back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD." (Ezekiel 37:11-14)

Are you in a situation where you are saying like Israel of old, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' We must remember that as believers we serve El Shaddai- God Almighty. He is able to dramatically change the hopeless situations that we confront in our lives. This promise of his is for you if you are in a hopeless situation. He says, So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

April 8

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." (Genesis 37:5-7)

This dream given by God to Joseph took more than 20 years to be fulfilled. Joseph was sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt and then sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's (King of Egypt) officials in whose house Joseph worked till he was thrown into prison by Potiphar whose wife had wrongly accused him of trying to forcibly lie with her. He spent two years in prison for no fault of his. Through a strange turn of events, all perfectly planned by God, Joseph was called in from prison to explain the dreams that Pharaoh saw; dreams which no one else could explain.

Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole of Egypt to manage the crisis of famine that was to come upon the land after a season of abundance. As prophesied by Joseph famine struck the land and even Canaan was afflicted. So Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to get food for his family. That's how Jacob's sons who had tried to destroy Joseph's future by selling him as a slave now found themselves in Joseph's presence.

The Bible says,

Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all it's people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. (Genesis 42:6)

...they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground...fulfilling what Joseph had dreamt several years before.....my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.....

Perhaps a dream that God gave you several years back has not still been fulfilled. Take courage from Joseph's story. The dream will find fulfillment in God's time. The Holy Spirit is working on it, even now.

April 9

"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. (Psalm 91:14)

Are you acknowledging the name of Jesus?

Jesus said,

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)

"I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. (Luke 12:8)

Even in the Old Testament times God wanted his people to acknowledge him; that he was the only true God.

Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. (Deuteronomy 4:39)

"But I am the LORD your God, [who brought you] out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me. (Hosea 13:4)

In the Gospel of Mark, Ch. 5, we read that Jesus once travelled to the region of Gerasenes to bring deliverance to a demon possessed man.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. (Mark 5:18-20)

As believers, God calls us to acknowledge him ourselves and also before others, especially to them who have never heard about the salvation that is offered by God through Jesus.

Will you carry the baton of the gospel and run for Jesus, acknowledging and proclaiming his name?

He will fulfill his promises for you too.

April 10

The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. (1 Samuel 10:6)

This is Samuel the prophet prophesying to Saul who was chosen by God as king of Israel when the Israelites heckled Samuel to appoint a king for them.

This was a turning point in Saul's life.

As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all the signs that Samuel told him were fulfilled that day. When Saul arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying. He was soon anointed king of Israel.

God anoints us with the Holy Spirit so that we can live strong lives as Christians. The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth as Jesus said.

If the decisions that we take in our lives are guided by the Holy Spirit of God, we can live victorious lives as Christians.

Sadly, Saul, though he had the anointing of the Spirit of God, chose to take decisions on his own and was finally rejected by God for disobeying him.

Paul the Apostle, writing to the Galatian Church says,

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. (Galatians 5:16-18)

Paul goes on to describe the acts of the sinful nature which destroys our relationship with God and concludes by saying,
I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:21)

Here is a piece of good advice for all believer's in Jesus Christ from the Apostle Paul:
Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

Shall we?

April 11

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

Sparrows! Who cares for sparrows? Not one of them beautiful birds. Nothing worth more than half a penny in Jesus' days. Wonder what people did with them in those days, buying two of them for a penny. Very surprising then that Jesus should mention them and also say that not one of them would fall to the ground apart from the will of our Father. Why care about them? one may ask. Only because they are one of God's wonderful creations. May not look great to our sight, but to the One who created them and for whom they were created, they look wonderful.

You feeling like a sparrow these days? Of not much worth in the sight of family and friends and church members?

This message is for you. Jesus says you are of much worth to him. Not only that; he knows every detail of your life; even things you don't know yourself. Like the number of hairs on your head. Yes, he says they are all numbered.

Oh, really! And what for you may ask?

Nothing much..he's keeping track of what you are losing each day...and even gaining.

In fact God is a good statistician..the best. The Psalmist says,
He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:4,5)

But the surprising fact is that though he is involved with these big numbers and accounts, he cares for you.

He cares for you more than he cares for sparrows. He says,
"So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Jesus loves you because you have accepted him as Savior and Lord. Trust in him. He will never fail you.

[If you have still not accepted him as Savior, please do so. I assure you that, "that'll be the best decision of your life."]

April 12

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him. (Nahum 1:7)

Sometimes trouble lands up in our lives without giving any notice. It may have been brewing for a while, but there you are in the thick of it suddenly. So what's to be done? A hurricane hits you mentally and pain like that associated with a sharp upper cut from the boxer's glove numbs you into silence.

Surprisingly, the very centre of a hurricane, called the eye is usually totally calm. This is directly surrounded by the eye wall which is where the fastest wind speeds are found.

The presence of Jesus is like the eye of the hurricane while surrounding are the howling winds of trouble. There's calm and peace; an assurance that everything will be fine.

And will he save? You bet, he will. He is mighty to save.

The Psalmist says,

For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save his life from those who condemn him. (Psalm 109:31)

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. (Psalm 138:7)

The Bible says,

The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)

So let's say aloud with faith what we read in the title verse here:

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

April 13

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

Is there any weakness in God? Shouldn't be/Couldn't be, because he is El Shaddai, God Almighty. Yet the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian believer's says, For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25)

God's weakness is nothing other than his agape love. He has compassion on us though we sin or commit unrighteous acts. Though he punishes, yet he loves like no one else can.

The prophet Jeremiah laments the destruction of Jerusalem in the book of Lamentations. Everything that was so glorious now lay waste. Many went into exile in a foreign land. Things looked dull and depressing. Yet he reminds himself of the Lord's great love.

A compassion that never fails can come only from the Creator of all. His compassion is new every morning.

Regarding the compassion of the Lord, The Psalmist says,

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who

fear him; (Psalm 103:13)

The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. (Psalm 116:5)

For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. (Psalm 135:14)

The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. (Psalm 145:9)

When everything looks gloomy, we can always remind ourselves of these verses. Great is the Lord's faithfulness. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

So be strong and courageous.

April 14

Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things! (Psalm 118:15)

At last! A sigh of relief and several "Praise the Lord's"...is the climax of many troublesome events in the life of believers. Time to witness that the Lord's right hand has done mighty things yet again. And then shouts of joy and victory.

The psalmist David says,

We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests. Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. (Psalm 20:5, 6)

The many narrow escapes that David experienced in his life because of the protecting and saving hand of the Lord prompted him to sing many a song. The right hand of the Lord did mighty things for him.

The psalmist sings his testimony in Psalm 98 in this manner:

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. (Psalm 98:1)

The Psalmist praises God for his marvelous deeds and says,

Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. (Psalm 72:18)

For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God. (Psalm 86:10)

We read the following verse in the book of Isaiah. It speaks of God's marvelous deeds.

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago. (Isaiah 25:1)

A victory in your life is a victory for God.

His loving arms are always underneath us carrying us at all times whether we as believers realize it or not.

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

Time of victory is time to glorify God yet again for his marvelous deeds.
So, "Praise the Lord."

April 15

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. (Luke 1:13)

A promise given when Zacharias and Elizabeth were old. Not a promise given when they were young and were eager to have children. Wonder when they must have finally reached a conclusion that Elizabeth was barren. After years of prayers, now a promise of a miracle, not the miracle itself.

Zacharias couldn't believe his ears. So he asked the angel a question which resulted in his getting tongue-tied. At the face of it, it didn't seem like a threatening question or an argument against the prophesy, yet it happened probably because of his lack of faith in the promise.

Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years." The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. "And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time." (Luke 1:18-20)

Again some more waiting period and several months later, the miracle was there for all to see.

And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John." And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished. And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. (Luke 1:59-64)

All's well that ends well.

A promised fulfilled in God's time. This is the John of whom John the Apostle writes: There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. (John 1:6)

This is the John of whom Jesus said,

I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:28)

The miracle was worth the waiting period.

God is great. We may not understand his ways but he is perfect in timing and giving.

April 16

Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. (Psalm 34:5)

Have you noticed the radiance on the faces of some believer's? It has nothing to do with their skin color or their physical beauty. The radiance of knowing Christ intimately is there for everyone to see in these children of God.

The promise above speaks of a specific blessing that every person born into this world can experience. If we look to Jesus Christ, whatever shame that we may have endured in our lives till then can be washed away by the power of his blood.

The blood of Jesus Christ is powerful to wash away shame of whatever cause and make us new creatures filled with eternal hope and joy.

The Bible says,

"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:6)

The choice is there for everyone who hears the good news of the gospel. Accept or reject Jesus Christ.

And what's the tragedy involved with rejecting Christ? Nothing but shame!

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

At the resurrection, some will awake to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Have you looked to Jesus? Though you face problems and trials while living here on earth, your reward is secure in heaven. And as this promise says, "Your face will never be covered with shame."

April 17

I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. (Genesis 17:6)

Another promise given by the Lord Almighty to Abram when he was 99 years old. But God had certain requirements from Abram's life. He said,

"I am God Almighty ; walk before me and be blameless. (Genesis 17:1)

A blameless walk is not easily achieved but we can always strive to achieve it with the help of the Holy Spirit who comes and resides in us when we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The psalmist David took such a decision in his life as we read in Psalms 101:

I will be careful to lead a blameless life - when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. (Psalm 101:2)

And definitely the Bible pronounces several blessings on the blameless.

The days of the blameless are known to the LORD, and their inheritance will endure forever. (Psalm 37:18)

Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace. (Psalm 37:37)

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. (Psalm 84:11)

Now and often, it is imperative for us as believers to check our own lives whether we are

walking before the Lord with a blameless heart.

Abraham's walk was blameless, so all the promises that God gave him were fulfilled. It would be the same for us too.

The Lord delights in those whose ways are blameless. The Bible says, He holds victory in store for the upright; he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless. (Proverbs 2:7)

May that come true in the lives of all of us.

April 18

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. (Isaiah 54:7)

Do you feel forsaken by the Lord? Israel did; and that too on several occasions. It was their fault most of the times.

Why doesn't God act instantaneously in some situation when we need him to? It may be anything from finances to our relationship with our spouse/children. Why the delay when we spend enough time in prayer, worship and meditation of the Word? Why the build up of nerve shattering tension?

How many more lessons in faith are to be learnt? Why does one finally give into satanic temptations? Could have been avoided if God arranged favorable circumstances. These are some of the thoughts that trouble believer's many a time.

But we must remember some of the things that the Bible says, especially this part in Psalm 103.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:8-14)

Without the Lord's help each moment, we are vulnerable to failure easily. Take the great prophet Elijah. One day, he comes down on King Ahab & the prophets of Baal with all guns blazing and the next day, he's depressed and wants to die because the wife of Ahab, queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. All the fire of yesterday seemed to have vanished into thin air.

It's all grace, dear Brother/Sister in Christ.

Whatever your situation today, believe in this promise from the Bible:

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. (Psalm 103:9,10)

With great mercies he will gather you.

April 19

Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full. (Psalm 31:23)

The Lord preserves the faithful. How wonderful!

When Aaron & Miriam, Moses' elder brother and sister spoke against him, God came down to speak for Moses. Wouldn't it be great if God was our spokesman?

Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numbers 12:5-8)

And the end result was:

The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them. When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam - leprous, like snow. (Numbers 12:9,10)

Faithful Moses had an immediate problem on his hands. He couldn't possibly leave his sister as she was, even though it was her fault for which she was suffering. So Moses cried out to the LORD, "O God, please heal her!" The LORD replied to Moses, "If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back." (Numbers 12:13,14)

Moses had earlier interceded for his brother when God decided to blot his name out of his book for sinning against the Lord by making a golden calf and leading the Israelites astray. Now here he was interceding for his sister.

And because Moses was faithful, his prayers were heard and many a crises averted.

Yes, God will preserve the faithful.

The Bible says,

For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever....(Psalm 37:28)

It's my prayer that we be found faithful in the Lord's eyes. Amen.

April 20

"This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down. (Isaiah 38:8)

(Ahaz's "clock", a type of sundial, was used to measure time in the ancient world.)

Can one reverse the order of time? How can one go back 10 minutes when that time has already passed/been completed?

No man can do it, but God Almighty can, because he holds time in his mighty hands. He can do anything that he wishes and this is no great feat for him to achieve.

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life. (Isaiah 38:1-5) And then came the promise that we read in the title verse.

Are you seeking a positive sign from the Lord these days as you pass through troublesome times?

The Lord says,

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' (Jeremiah 33:3)

The greatest sign of all times is found in this verse from the book of Isaiah. It says, Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

Jesus, "Immanuel" is with you. "Do Not Fear" is what he says. He heard Hezekiah's prayer and saw his tears. He will deliver you too because he is Almighty God.

April 21

Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. (Acts 27:23-25)

The Apostle Paul and 275 others were traveling to Italy in a ship which got hit by a storm called the "northeaster." The ship took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, they finally gave up all hope of being saved.

That was when Paul stood up and gave them the message that we read in the title verse.

After more than 14 days of experiencing the terrors of nature, they decided to run the ship aground if they could and finally they swam to safety when the ship's bow got stuck and wouldn't move. Once safely on shore, they found out that the island was called Malta. Unknown to him, God had arranged some missionary work for Paul on this island. Many people were healed when Paul prayed for them. After 3 months, they (Paul & Luke) sailed to Rome and when they reached there, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

And Luke ends the book of Acts by writing:

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 28:30,31)

The faithfulness of God when he gives a promise is clearly outlined here. Amidst chaos and impending death on the high sea, God promised Paul that he will stand trial before Caesar in Rome. God saved not only Paul & Luke the Physician who wrote the book of Acts, but

also the 274 others on the ship as he had promised Paul.

When we see only the present with our restricted senses, God sees and knows our future. He has already been there where we will only be later. Here and now or there and when, he will be with us at all times. Great is his faithfulness.

April 22

Surely he hath borne our grief's, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4, 5)

Propheying more than 800 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, Isaiah the prophet prophesies the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, carrying our grief, our sorrows, our transgressions, our iniquities and our lack of peace. Some translations mention infirmities instead of grief's.

And Jesus, when he started preaching regarding the kingdom of God gave an invitation that still bears fruit though more than 2000 years have passed since he uttered it. He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

This is not a temporary rest that Jesus invites all to. The Bible says, There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. (Hebrews 4:9,10)

O! What a glorious day that will be for each of us who believe and live for the Lord. An eternal rest of which the Bible says, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3,4)

The author of the book of Hebrews exhorts all who believe in the Lord regarding entering the eternal rest in this manner:

Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:11)

Let us not be like most of the Israelites who left Egypt for Canaan. Although they were delivered from Pharaoh and the Egyptians by God Almighty, they were not allowed to enter their rest- Canaan because of their unbelief and disobedience.

God promises all those who believe and are obedient to him by saying, He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. (Revelation 21:7)

April 23

"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." (Revelation 22:7)

**"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:12)
He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)**

Time and again it is imperative that every believer reads these verses from the book of Revelation in which Jesus affirms and reaffirms that he is coming back.

Are you waiting expectantly for his coming? Are you preparing yourself for his coming? The time for the Wedding of the Lamb is drawing near.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints. Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." (Revelation 19:7-9)

Did you notice this part of the above verses?

"For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready."

You are a part of the bride if you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and are living for him day after him, being obedient to his Word and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says,

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:52)

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

The bride is getting ready and so is the bridegroom. The big day is drawing near. Will you be there to meet your bridegroom Jesus? Hope you would be there.

April 24

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. (Isaiah 51:6)

In this promise, God Almighty affirms that salvation from him will last forever. What he has said, he will bring to pass because of his unfailing righteousness.

Terrible times are upon the world. Famines, plagues, wars and natural calamities are on the rise. There is chaos all over the world. Each moment there are more than 50 wars raging in the world. The economic slump in many countries is leading to joblessness, homelessness and hopelessness. Yet the believer in Jesus Christ has hope for now and for the future. He/She knows that Jesus will never forsake him/her, come what may.

The Apostle Paul asks,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Romans 8: 35)

And then he answers the question himself:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8: 37)

The Apostle Paul was convinced about the unfailing love of God through Jesus Christ, so he wrote the following to the Roman believers:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8: 38,39)

Your salvation is a sure thing if you have believed in the sin atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and are living in obedience to his Word. Nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. May that thought give peace and hope to every troubled soul this day.

April 25

"Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. For your Maker is your husband - the LORD Almighty is his name - the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. (Isaiah 54:4,5)

Disgraced, humiliated, ashamed, reproached...was what Israel thought of herself. Punished for her sins and unfaithfulness, the nation no longer thought it could gain the favor of God Almighty. Yet with this promise that she received, hope still remained.

However hopeless be our condition, however deep be our sinful nature, God's mercy can still be availed. He is always willing to take us back if we repent and forsake our sinful nature.

Long ago, God said,

Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:20)

God has compassion on you, his heart yearns for you when you move away from him and live as you please. He sends the Holy Spirit to speak to you and bring you back to sweet fellowship with him. He says,"You will not suffer shame or fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated."

Walk with the Lord. That is the only way you can have heavenly peace and joy. The peace and joy that the world gives are temporary. Lasting peace and joy can only be attained when you have a close walk with your Savior.

Jesus loves you and wants to give you the peace that passes all understanding. He promises,

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

April 26

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

In Psalm 85, the psalmist prays to God--Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? (Psalm 85:6)

Before asking God to revive them, the psalmist acknowledges 4 great things that the Lord did to the repentant nation Israel:

- 1) You showed favor to your land, O LORD;
- 2) You restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- 3) You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.
- 4) You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger. (Psalm 85:1-3)

Then comes 2 requests- restore & revive.

In the promise that we have as the title verse today, God promises to revive. But revive whom? Revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the contrite.

Lowly means humble and contrite means feeling regret and sorrow for one's sins or offenses.

God's promise stands good even this day- if we approach him humbly and with a contrite heart, he will revive us. And when God revives, the peace and happiness that ensues is wonderful to the person who experiences it.

Are you yearning for God to revive you? He will revive you if you seek him with a humble and contrite heart. Seek him. Experience it. Shout it from the rooftops.

April 27

The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." (Exodus 33:14)

Going somewhere but not confident about your journey? Take the above promise with you. You can't get any greater protection, because the One who goes with you is none other than God Almighty.

Do you fear the enemy who is greater in number? Take another promise.

"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (2 Kings 6:16)

A host of angels to take care of you as a child of God.

Worried about the unseen evil forces? The Bible has a remedy- Believe this-

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Ezra the scribe who was among the returning exiles from Babylon was given a command

by King Artaxerxes:

Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God. (Ezra 7:19)

Ezra writes: I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him." So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. (Ezra 8:22,23)

If you have looked to the Lord, his gracious hand will be on you at all times. He will fulfill this promise of his in your life too.

"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." (Exodus 33:14)

April 28

Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. (Isaiah 61:7)

Thinking of quitting? Wait a moment. The Lord has a promise for you. He's talking of double portions today.

What's in it for me? you ask. Well, you need to hang in there for some more time to see your reward.

It's no use, you say; all this praying and fasting and humbling yourself. The Lord doesn't notice.

Exactly what the nation Israel said sometime back.

'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.'" (Malachi 3:14,15)

Your assessment of things may not be exactly how God assesses it. His ways are different. He knows how to work things out for your good. The Bible says, And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

So forget the thoughts of quitting. Remember, you are a soldier in Jesus' army.

Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. (2 Timothy 2:7)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Meditate on the promise for today-Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs.

April 29

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Are you experiencing the freedom that comes from knowing Jesus? If yes, it is because of the intimate spiritual relationship that you have with him. If no, spiritual intimacy with Christ should be your priority, aim and goal.

Most of us have experienced at one time or the other 'a great freedom' in our beings when we were in the company of a close friend. Easy to share and easy to reciprocate. We can have a similar relationship with Jesus though we may not see him bodily.

No doubt, Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but he is also the one of whom the Bible says,

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15, 16)

There are some believers who think that Jesus is not able/not willing to sympathize with our weaknesses. That's not true. Because he went through all the temptations that we have to go through, he knows our state and how much we can endure. Yet he desires that we overcome as he overcame and live victorious lives.

Freedom comes with submission and if one can submit totally to Jesus, a great freedom can be experienced inside us. The Son of God is always willing to set us free if we can submit to him. It's my prayer for you this day that the Lord may set you free to proclaim his name all throughout the world.

Experience freedom that comes from knowing Christ.

April 30

For nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. (Luke 1:31)

These words that the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary left her surprised and confused. She had questions for Gabriel. "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34)

The answer that the angel gave her to this question was something unheard of.

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

To convince Mary that all things are possible with God, the angel announced the pregnancy of aged Elizabeth.

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. (Luke 1:36)

Mary couldn't immediately comprehend the depth of the promises she had received, yet she answered.

"I am the Lord's servant,"... "May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38)

In Mary's case, it was concerning the Lord's birth. Even otherwise, in many stages of our lives, in differing situations, sometimes we may not be able to immediately comprehend the mighty promises that we receive from the Lord, but we can always have a humble attitude like Mary and tell the Lord what she said, "I am the Lord's servant,"... "May it be to me as you have said."..... (Luke 1:38)

Always remember--Nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

May 1

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

Early in our spiritual life we must realize who's waiting to make us fall and who's always ready to uphold us. In the Old Testament, satan remained hidden and we don't read his name being mentioned as much as it is in the New Testament. John the Apostle mentions among many, one specific purpose why Jesus came to this world that we live in.

...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

Jesus loves you and upholds you whenever Satan makes you fall. The psalmist says, I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me. (Psalm 118:13)

In Psalm 124 we read the Psalmist praising God for God's deliverance, Praise be to the LORD, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. (Psalm 124:6, 7)

The Lord wants to make your steps firm since you have trusted in him.

If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. (Psalm 37:23,24)

Remember the favorite "Do not fear" promise from the book of Isaiah?

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

Yes, the Lord's righteous right hand will uphold you when Satan tries to make you fall. God is faithful. Trust in him.

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

May 2

Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:16)

Indeed, God has prepared a city for all of us who believe in and live for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says this about Abraham & Co. who obeyed the call of God Almighty and believed in him:

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age - and Sarah herself was barren - was

enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one..... (Hebrews 11:11-16)

Are you looking for a country of your own ones?; are you longing for a better country- a heavenly one as Abraham, Isaac and Israel did? Blessed are you if you are.

There are people who have vast lands in their names while they live on earth, but who live without any hope for the hereafter. What's the point? Jesus said, What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? (Luke 9:25)

Our attitude should be like Abraham of whom the author of the book of Hebrews says, For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:10)

New Jerusalem should be our final destination. The promise is for you and me who have accepted Jesus as our Savior. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. (Revelation 3:12)

Praise the Lord. Hallelujah.

May 3

For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:6)

As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him - (1 Peter 2:4)

We read here of Jesus who is the chosen and precious cornerstone and also the living stone. The Apostle Peter says that he was chosen by God and precious to him. Also to us who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone and "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."

Peter emphasizes what was written in the Old Testament: The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

If Jesus is precious to us who believe, we are precious to him too. That's what Peter explains in his epistle.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not

received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:8, 10)

Every earthly honor and exaltation pales in comparison with the call of God upon your life. So consider the call of God upon your life as precious. The God who called Abraham, Moses, Samuel and many others is the one who has called you to serve him.

Always think of the call of God in your life as the greatest privilege that you can ever have. Serve him faithfully. He will surely reward you with riches eternal and blessings supernal. Get ready to hear this call from your Master:
'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' (Matthew 25:23)

May 4

Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)

The return of Jesus Christ is not to bear sin but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Aircrafts can be put on autopilot mode to run a charted course. Sadly, there is no autowaiting mode for the believer to run the course from here to eternity for there are constant battles to deal with. The flesh, the world and satan, one at a time or in any combination has to be dealt with constantly till the end comes, either when one joins Christ at his coming or when one breathes the last breath here on earth and joins Christ.

Waiting is a difficult period to deal with for whatever be the end result. Waiting can be taxing to the mind as well as the body. People wait to give life (birth), to live (recover from an illness/accident) and there are some who also wait to die (terminal illnesses).

Waiting cannot be escaped from at many stages of our life. Why do we have to wait? Maturity is one answer. In the case of a child growing in the womb, the period of becoming mature enough to live on birth is vital. Maturity brings on ripening as in the case of fruits and they deliver a luscious taste than when they are immature and unripe. Also, for the believer, God does things with his perfect timing and in the process of waiting he effects a lot of changes in the person concerned.

Have you been waiting for something positive to happen? Is it taxing your mind a lot? The Bible has simple assurances to deal with that.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6,7)
And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

And let it be so in the lives of all who read this. Amen.

May 5

He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea. (Psalm 102:17)

2 key words in the above promise are "will respond" and "not despise". Often we despair regarding lost opportunities. It could have worked out but it didn't. Perhaps it was our fault. So does there remain any hope?

Prayer is a weapon that can be used to sort out umpteen problems that surface in our lives because of personal carelessness or unwise decisions.

Yes, prayer brings renewed hope because as the above promise says, "God does not despise" and "he will respond" if we come back to him asking for forgiveness and renewal.

The Bible says,

The LORD hears the needy and does not despise his captive people. (Psalm 69:33)

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

God can and will work out better things for us if we humble ourselves, confess our sins and unrighteousness and ask for his help in turning our failures into success.

The Bible says, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.' (Psalm 51:17)

He is Almighty and can turn things around in a moment.

Are you brokenhearted? Are you crushed in your spirit?

Jesus will not despise your prayers but instead will respond favorably to your pleas. Trust in him. He is your Savior. He loves you.

May 6

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." (Genesis 8:20-22)

Off to a fresh start. Noah and his family were beginning anew after the flood. They all must have had their own share of stories to tell their children and grand children later on. Stories of 'before the flood' and stories of their sojourn in the ark.

Sometimes we get stuck in a rut and desire to begin anew or desire a change. If you are praying for a fresh beginning, perhaps a new job, a change of place to live or any other thing, it's good to place the matter at the Lord's feet and seek his guidance. And when he gives the go ahead, it's time to step out in faith.

There's no point in wasting time placing still another fleece in the presence of the Lord when he has already spoken twice or thrice. It's time to act. The Lord is always willing to help us with fresh beginnings.

God strengthened Noah by giving him and his family promises for a wonderful future. He said,

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and

all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. (Genesis 9:1, 2)

His promises to you are also on similar lines....blessings for you and your family. To sum it all up, here's a verse from the book of Jeremiah.

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

Believe it. Step out in faith. And may Jesus bless you always.

May 7

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3,4)

Why has God so graciously given us great and precious promises?

There are 2 reasons for that:

1. To participate in his divine nature.
2. To escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

People of this world who do not know Christ cannot participate in the divine nature of God. They fall easily for the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. Even as believer's we know how difficult it is to stand firm in the face of temptations. Yet because of the Holy Spirit of God who from within us keeps constantly convicting us of sin and unrighteousness, we are constantly alerted.

Participating in God's divine nature is such a privilege. Jesus said, I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)

The power and holy attributes of God manifests in the lives of believer's who submit to God and are obedient to his Word. The only way to live a powerful Christian life is to live in submission to God and his Holy Word and the power of the Holy Spirit manifests in the lives of those who do this.

The promise for today's devotional states that:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Are you part-taking of this glorious privilege? It's once in a lifetime offer.

To escape the corruption in the world, God invites everyone to participate in his divine nature. Will you accept his invitation? If you have already accepted his invitation, will you take a firm decision to stay true to your Savior? He will surely bless you.

May 8

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. (Isaiah 49:15,16)

God gave this promise to the nation of Israel which thought that God had forsaken and forgotten her. Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." (Isaiah 49:14)

Do you feel the same this day?

Moses obeyed God and went into Pharaoh's presence and declared to him what the Lord had said. The Bible says,

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"

Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go." (Exodus 5:1, 2)

Pharaoh showed that he didn't care and increased his atrocities on the Israelites. He told the slave masters not to give the Israelites straw for making bricks. The Israelites were angry and poured out their ire on Moses and Aaron.

Moses was depressed. He returned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all." (Exodus 5:22,23)

God did rescue the Israelites from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but in his time and according to his plan. Moses, Aaron and the Israelites had to wait. But finally the time came when they saw the last of Egypt.

Circumstances will change dear friend. Be watchful in prayer. Wait for God. Remember, God has engraved you on the palms of his hands. He will not let the enemy win. Trust and hope in Jesus.

May 9

This is what the LORD says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; he will escape with his life. (Jeremiah 21:8,9)

Strange but perfect are the ways of God. Here he asks Jeremiah the prophet to tell the Israelites that if they wanted to remain alive, they must surrender to their enemies, the Babylonians. Staying in the city or in own their homes would lead to their death.

God knows what's best for us and where we can be secure. Surrendering to the enemy was not going to be a pleasant life, but they could remain alive and come back to their homes at God's appointed time.

Long back during the time of Abraham, the Bible says,

So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me." "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her. (Genesis

16:3-6)

Hagar decided enough was enough and ran away into the desert.

The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her."
(Genesis 16:7-9)

God knew that it was in her best interest to be with Abraham at this period of her life. She was pregnant and God had a plan for her and her son. God gave her promises and sent her back.

Believe me when I say, God knows which place is best for you and your family. Move ahead only as the Spirit of God guides you.

May 10

**For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.
(Psalm 9:12)**

Do you feel that people ignore you?; That they don't give you much importance?
Do your requests fall on deaf ears? Well I have good news for you. People may ignore your cry, but God doesn't. He hears even the groans that comes from the depths of your heart.

David once cried to the Lord: Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught at the voice of the enemy, at the stares of the wicked; for they bring down suffering upon me and revile me in their anger. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. (Psalm 55:1-5)

I guess none of us would want to be in his shoes. David was desperate. He just wanted out. That's why he said,
"Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest - I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm." (Psalm 55:6-8)

When people near and dear to us hurt us, the pain is overwhelming, but as the promise for today says, "he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted." So there's hope for you who are afflicted.

David found strength in his God and so he said,
But I call to God, and the LORD saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He ransoms me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. (Psalm 55:16-18)

Be strengthened this day, with these wonderful promises dear friend and always make it a point to cast your cares on the LORD. He will sustain you; he will never let you down.

May 11

From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people. (Psalm

3:8)

During the three and a half years of Jesus' ministry, we read of him bringing deliverance to many people who were afflicted by demons. One of the foremost among them was the deliverance that he wrought for the demon possessed man at Gerasenes.

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." (Mark 5:1-9)

That morning Jesus had sat in a boat and taught the people speaking to them in parables. And when it was evening he expressed his desire to go to the other side of the lake with his disciples. They had to face a furious storm while they were rowing to the other side. The disciples were frightened and they woke up Jesus who was sleeping on a cushion in the stern. They said, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" (Mark 4:38). Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves and everything was calm again.

Jesus had come crossing the lake to Gerasenes just to bring deliverance to this one demon afflicted man. We don't read of him doing any other work there. The people there didn't want him to stay. So he crossed the lake again.

Every person is important to Jesus. As a child of God, you are even more important to him. The Bible says that his love for you is everlasting. So do not despair, even if other people don't give you much importance. You are precious to Jesus. Live for him and bring glory to his name.

May 12

The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. (Genesis 25:23, 24)

Rebecca had questions for the Lord when she got pregnant. The Bible says, The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. (Genesis 25:22)

What we read above was God's reply to her and in the fullness of time, what the Lord said came into being.

Rebecca remembered the Lord's words, "the older will serve the younger." Later on as her sons grew up she planned on her own to bring into effect the Lord's plan, but that was a disaster. She made Jacob, the younger son, deceive his almost blind father to receive the blessings due his elder brother Esau. Jacob had to go away from home and returned only after 20 years.

When God gives us a promise, he will guide us by his Holy Spirit to accomplish what he has planned or decided. Making our own plans to fulfill God's promise may eventually result in chaos and sorrow for the persons involved.

When Solomon set out to build the temple of the Lord, this is what the Bible says:

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. (1 Chronicles 28:11, 12)

Did you notice the part where it says..... He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD....

God is able to fulfill his plans for our lives. All we need to do is to be receptive to his voice and guidance and walk and act on his counsel. Then his plans will be fulfilled at the right time.

May 13

Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:24)

The time is coming soon when this promise will be fulfilled. The curtains are going to fall on this present world. God has promised a new heaven and a new earth.

Isaiah prophesied it long ago.

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. (Isaiah 65:17)

John the Apostle saw it in visions.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1)

It will come into being soon.

The present earth has been reserved for fire and no one can change its fate.

By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:7)

When Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18), he meant it and soon, as we read in the title verse today, he will destroy all wicked dominion, authority and power. He will finally hand over the kingdom to God the Father.

Is your future secure in the hands of Jesus? If not, please take a moment and consider what you read just now. Submit your life into the loving hands of Jesus, the Savior of the world. It has great implications regarding your future life.

The Bible says,

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

May that blessed promise come true in your life.

May 14

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

This is a wonderful passage from Hebrews 11. What all would have gone through Abraham's mind when he had to travel 3 days to the land of Moriah and sacrifice his son there on one of the mountains will remain a mystery, unless of course we meet him some day and discuss it. Yet being acquainted with all the emotions that come to us humans, we can fairly assume that this was no menial task. The sorrow and anguish that must have burdened him must have been mighty. Perhaps there must have been quite a few "Why God?" that circulated in his mind while he traveled. Perhaps God would change his mind on the way. Perhaps this was just a bad dream.

Then came the heart rending part for Abraham. The Bible says, When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. (Genesis 22:9, 10)

I wonder how this man past 100 in age would have held that knife without his hand quivering because he was about to give away what he and his wife had yearned for and received after waiting for 25 years. Perhaps he must have kept his eyes open to a bare minimum and would have wanted the whole affair to be over swiftly. How would he answer the questions of Sarah when he went back?

A 1000 questions and most of them without clear cut answers must have swirled through the old man's mind in the 3 days after he set out from home, but now was the decisive moment. He could make it or break it. And he did not falter. As he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son, the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." (Genesis 22:10-14)

Very true, what the writer of Hebrews says. Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. No human pats on the back for him, but heaven's recognition that he truly feared God. The Apostle Paul's interestingly arrives at this conclusion from his study of the life of Abraham. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring - not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (Romans 4:16)
Praise the Lord.

May 15

Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. (Psalm 41:1)

Great promise for "he/she who has regard for the weak"

In Psalm 41, David speaks of 5 great promises for/blessings that come upon them who have mercy on the weak (NIV) / poor (KJV).

- 1.The LORD delivers him in times of trouble.
- 2.The LORD will protect him and preserve his life.
- 3.The LORD will bless him in the land.
- 4.The LORD will not surrender him to the desire of his foes.
- 5.The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.

God desires his children to be merciful. That's why Jesus said,
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

Jesus once rebuked the teachers of the law and Pharisees for the duplicity regarding their faith. He said,

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (Matthew 23:23)

Justice, mercy and faithfulness are important in the God's sight. A judgemental attitude often spoils our relationship with people and with God.

Jesus was merciful to the weak and poor. So should we be. The promises that are outlined above comes true in the life of them that show mercy.

May the Holy Spirit of God help all of us to be as merciful as Jesus was. That would bring us great blessings.

May 16

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will plant the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the offspring of men and of animals. Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:27, 28)

Israel and Judah lay desolate because of the massive invasions by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Both men and animals suffered the devastations wrought by this Gentile king. And God says he was watching over this destruction. He had decided to uproot, tear and overthrow his own people because of their rebellion. Yet, he promised them that as he watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so he will also watch over them to build and to plant when their time of punishment was over. He said he was going to plant the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the offspring of men and of animals.

Are you suffering the Lord's wrath for the sins and rebellion in your life? Perhaps you have repented and still are suffering and you ask why? Hang in there friend. Very soon the Lord's appointed time for release from your punishment will come.

He will build you up again. He will restore you what you lost in the period of your punishment.

In the Psalms we read of cries for restoration:

Restore us, O LORD God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

(Psalm 80:19)

Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us. (Psalm 85:4)

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negev. (Psalm 126:4)

He has this to say to you:

"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," (Isaiah 54:7,8)

The Lord will build you up. The Lord will restore to you what you lost. The Lord will shower his great blessings once again on your life. So, Praise the Lord.

May 17

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' (Jeremiah 33:3)

Have you desired an in-depth relationship with the Lord? It's possible, if you have the thirst for such a relationship. The thirst that the psalmists had for God stands out in their Psalms.

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

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

The Apostle James gives us some advice regarding this:

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:8)

God desires to have a close fellowship with each one of us, but on his terms. We can always approach him with a repentant and contrite heart and he will guide us each day of our lives with his Holy Spirit, till his return or till the day we breathe our last breath here on earth and join him in eternity.

Spending quality time in prayer, praise and worship, meditating his Word and bearing fruit as a Christian will bring about a greater presence of the Almighty in our lives.

When Job underwent intense trials in his life, he remembered the intimacy he had with God earlier.

"How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness! Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God's intimate friendship blessed my house, (Job 29:2-4)

This intimacy with God is possible in our lives too. Abraham experienced it, Moses did, Samuel did; you too can. Let your heart cry be ... My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (Psalm 84:2)

May 18

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:3)

Things seem to linger sometimes in our lives. Situations don't seem to be changing. We have the promise but there's no real action taking place. A sort of inert state even though we have been praying and worshipping and fasting and claiming the promises. So what's God up to?

Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah was to be prophet after Elijah. God told Elijah to anoint Elisha to succeed him as prophet. We read in 1 Kings 19- So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?" So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant. (1 Kings 19:19-21)

There was not much for Elisha to do for quite a few years. In fact, long after Elijah's time and after Elisha was established as prophet, once when the king of Israel set out with the king of Judah and the king of Edom to fight against the king of Moab and they couldn't find any water for themselves or their animals, Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD through him?" An officer of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. " (2 Kings 3:11)

The last sentence gives us a hint as to what Elisha used to do when Elijah was prophet in Israel- He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. Not very exciting, especially if you are in the ministry.

But in the fullness of God's time, Elisha had double the anointing power as that of Elijah. In fact, the first miracle that Elisha did when God's power was on him was the same as the last miracle that Elijah did, before he was taken up into heaven- the parting of the waters of the Jordan river.

If you have been waiting for God to use you powerfully in the ministry, this is the message for you. In a little while from now, in the fullness of God's divine time, he will use you mightily. Till then, stay calm, stay focussed and keep doing what the Lord wants you to do now.

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

May 19

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

In Psalm 91 we read of some of the deadly weapons that the devil forges against believers.
...fowler's snare and the deadly pestilence. (Psalm 91:3)
...the terror of night and the arrow that flies by day. (Psalm 91:5)
...the pestilence that stalks in the darkness and the plague that destroys at midday.
(Psalm 91:6)

But God says that none of these weapons will prevail. How & why can these weapons be forged against us and yet not prevail. The answer is given in the same psalm.
If you make the Most High your dwelling - even the LORD, who is my refuge - then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. (Psalm 91:9-12)

As believers we must remember that God is our refuge and fortress; that we dwell in the shelter of the Most High and rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Because we love God and acknowledge his name, he says,

"I will rescue you and I will protect you..... (Psalm 91:14)

When we call upon him, he will answer us; he will be with us in trouble, he will deliver us and honor himself.

God assures you this day through his Word that if you dwell in his shelter and live a life pleasing to him, "No weapon forged against you will prevail."

May 20

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. (Psalm 145:18)

"Truth" is so very important in the life of every believer. But only each one of us know how much truth there really is in us. Lying blatantly may not be a habit but speaking half-truths which are also half-lies can be a habit. Let's look at someone who specializes both in lying as well as speaking half truths or half lies. And many are deceived by him.
Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5)

The serpent said, "You will not surely die"- which is half truth and half lie in that they didn't immediately die bodily, but there happened a death of their perfect relationship with God and also brought about bodily death later on.

The serpent said, "you will be like God"- which was far from the truth.

Speaking of the devil, Jesus said,
He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
(John 8:44)

David realized what God desired in his life after sinning and then repenting on being reprimanded and so he said,
Surely you desire truth in the inner parts ; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
(Psalm 51:6)

Jesus loves us and expects us to speak "the truth" in love. The promise for today says,
"The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."(Psalm 145: 18)
So let us take this advice given by the psalmist, for, that has a great bearing on our prayers being answered by God. Praise the Lord.

May 21

But now bring me a harpist." While the harpist was playing, the hand of the LORD came upon Elisha and he said, "This is what the LORD says: Make this valley full of ditches. For this is what the LORD says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink. (2 Kings 3:15-17)

3 kings were in search for water for themselves and their animals and when they couldn't find any, they consulted Elisha for a word from the Lord and the words that we read above are what he said.

When Elisha asked them to make the valley full of ditches, they must have thought that they would find water when they dug. But that was not how God had decided to give them water. It's true that they dug ditches, but this is how God gave them water. The next morning, about the time for offering the sacrifice, there it was - water flowing from the direction of Edom! And the land was filled with water. (2 Kings 3:20)

So if God has promised to do a miracle, he can do it in any way that he chooses. The Bible says,
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. Give thanks to the God of gods. Give thanks to the Lord of Lords: to him who alone does great wonders. (Psalm 136:1-4)

The last verse says, "who alone does great wonders."

The 3 kings dug ditches and the water came flowing into them. The ditches were important, for they could hold the blessing (water) that God sent. We have to obey what God says and he will do miracles his way in answer to our prayers.

The Bible says,

He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. (Job 5:9) (Job 9:10)

May 22

The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. (Isaiah 58:11)

Satisfaction is what we all desire in our lives; be it in our spiritual, material or in our family lives. And God promised Israel that he would satisfy their needs even in a sun-scorched land. Wherever we live in this world, we can find satisfaction in Jesus Christ. God wants to be our guide, he wants to satisfy our needs and he wants to strengthen our frame. He

promised his chosen ones that they would be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Many times God expressed his desire to bring satisfaction to his people. I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:14)

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

I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations. (Joel 2:19)

Spiritual satisfaction is so very important. Often believers neglect their spiritual lives in quest for material gain and finally they are neither satisfied spiritually nor materially. Spiritual satisfaction gives great peace of mind even when the material needs are not met immediately. But Jesus has promised to meet out material needs too. He said, But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

God loves us because we have trusted in him through faith in the atoning sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ. He will provide us with what we need to live satisfied lives while we live here on earth too. He is able to fulfill our needs like no one else can. So we can confidently say the following along with the psalmist;

I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1, 2)

May 23

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

Israel was a diseased nation because of the many sins that it had committed, but God here was promising them restoration. He was going to bring them health and healing.

God is our healer. He always was and always will be. Leading his children through the wilderness enroute to Canaan, God gave them a promise of healing. He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you." (Exodus 15:26)

Yes our Lord is Jehovah Rapha or Ropheka, God our Healer. He promised healing to the Israelites many a times. The psalmist David sang, Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases. (Psalm 103:2, 3)

Once when 2 blind men followed Jesus seeking healing for their blindness, Jesus asked them; "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you" and their sight was restored.

Jesus can heal you too. He can still do a miracle. Will you believe despite the arguments against your healing from a scientific/medical point of view?

Will the following be your testimony?

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:19, 20)

May 24

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. (John 16:13)

Everyone needs a guide, especially in unfamiliar terrain and what better guide can one have other than the Spirit of God. He is not just another guide, he is the guide who guides believer's in all the truth.

After being a believer for a while, we sometimes tend to think that we have learnt it all and some do behave as they are "know it all's." But we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit each day of our lives until the moment we step into eternity.

God was with the Israelites continually from the time they left Egypt and travelled to Canaan.

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. (Exodus 13:21)

Nehemiah commented: "Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. (Nehemiah 9:19)

And even now God desires to guide his children. That's why he's given us the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, to guide us in the truth continually. Each day, we can pray these prayers that the psalmist's prayed and receive divine guidance and counsel in our lives.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:5)

Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. (Psalm 31:3)

Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. (Psalm 43:3)

As we pray and receive guidance each day, we too can confidently say what the sons of Korah said: For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end. (Psalm 48:14)

May 25

And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." (Romans 15:12)

In the fullness of God's time, part of this prophesy came into being and the Savior came into the world to save sinners. Peter the apostle writes of what our true condition was without Christ and with Christ how dramatic a change has come about.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9, 10)

The Apostle Paul shares his views in this manner:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved.

(Ephesians 2:1-5)

And the prophesy written above will soon be brought into completion, for the Bible says, I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)

Your Savior is coming back...very soon...Are you ready to meet him?

Escape the wrath of God's judgment by living a holy life, obeying the Word of God and obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit.

May 26

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (Revelation 3:8)

Can't preach as effectively as others do? Can't sing as well as others do? Can't pray as mightily as others do? You would if asked, describe yourself as one with "little strength". Well then, what you read above is a wonderful promise for you that was once given to the church at Philadelphia in Asia Minor.

Faithfulness is what counts on the long run. Jesus knows our deeds. Keeping his word and not denying his name were a couple of important factors that Jesus saw in the church at Philadelphia, so he gave them a wonderful promise..."See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut."

Mind you, the promise was given by Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible says, These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he

opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. (Revelation 3:7)

Sustained faithfulness is what Jesus desires, so he exhorted the believer's in the church at Philadelphia saying,

I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.
(Revelation 3:11)

When 5 of the other churches in Asia Minor to whom the Lord gave specific instructions eventually ceased to function, the churches in Philadelphia and Smyrna survived because they obeyed the Word of the Lord.

Jesus knows how much strength each one of us has and even if our strength may seem little compared to others, keeping his Word and not denying his name always brings wonderful blessings from the Lord.

May 27

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38)

So what have you been giving? And does the above promise on giving work as Jesus said? It does, but the dividends come back to us only as heaven decides.

Not only money-wise, even in other ways things can be measured back to us as we give. Talking about love, can you expect it from others without giving any? Of course God gives his love to us without us having given any, but speaking in terms of our relationship with our family members or others, nearly everyone expects us to give as we wish to receive.

Jesus also said,

"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. (Matthew 7:1, 2)

That means whatever you measure out to others, the same will be measured back to you in one way or the other. A very good example of this is Jacob (from the book of Genesis) who happened to deceive his father Isaac and his brother Esau and then went away from home fearing that Esau would kill him. He landed up in his uncle's house where he labored for 20 years and was deceived by his uncle continually. With the measure he used, it was measured back to him.

If we measure out love, peace, joy and the other wonderful fruit of the Holy Spirit to others; in due time, these will also be measured out to us. And when we give, Jesus says, A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. And the golden rule that Jesus taught is so very right. He said, So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Shall we then be doers of the Word rather than just listeners or readers? If we do, then surely this promise of Jesus will come true in our lives too.

May 28

And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." (1 Kings 18:41)

This is what the Lord must have spoken to Elijah and as the Lord said, so Elijah proclaimed to king Ahab. Mind you there was no trace of rain, not even a small rain cloud or even a distant thunder. The sound of heavy rain first sounded in the spiritual realm but Elijah was sure that it would happen physically soon enough. But instead of just waiting, he chose to pray and see the miracle being birthed.

So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. (1 Kings 18:42)

Amidst praying we read of Elijah searching for signs of the impending miracle. "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back." (1 Kings 18:43)

And finally...The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" (1 Kings 18:44)

A sign that his prayers had been answered was sent from God- A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea. A sign, not very prominent, nevertheless a sign to indicate the miracle will happen immediately.

And then the miracle itself...after 3 and a 1/2 years of drought.... Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. (1 Kings 18:45)

Hallelujah! The drought was finally over. Promised by God. Birthed by Elijah's prayer. God will end the drought in your life too. Meanwhile get into the birthing mode..prayer, prayer and more prayer...and don't forget to look for the signs..even small ones..for they signify a soon happening miracle.

May 29

The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still. (Exodus 14:14)(NIV)
The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. (Exodus 14:14)(KJV)
The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent. (Exodus 14:14)(NAS)

Be still; hold your peace; keep silent.

The message is clear; whatever be the translation you use. Don't get fidgety; don't mess around; don't do something against God's plan. The Lord will fight for you.

But how does one stand still when the enemy is close on the heels? Especially with a huge sea in front and mountains on either side. The enemy is no stranger to you. You've just escaped from him with the skin of your teeth. Now he's back again to haunt you as a bad dream.

But Moses says, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever."

Can we believe Moses? Must we believe him?
There's no other go. So better believe.

And when they held their peace, God revealed his plan to Moses:
Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. "As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. "As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. "Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen." (Exodus 14:15-18)

And it happened exactly as God said it would.

Are you being pursued by the enemy? Hold still. Don't murmur. Listen to what God has to say to you. He has a plan for your deliverance. Follow that plan and God will destroy the satanic forces that are troubling you. Remember,
The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!' (Deuteronomy 33:27)
Praise the Lord.

May 30

Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me." (Psalm 50:14, 15)

In this promise from Psalms 50, God speaks and tells the Israelites of what pleases him and how they can get deliverance when they are in trouble. God made it clear that he was not so much interested in the outward expressions of their faith as he was in their inner purity and faithfulness, which he was always looking for in their lives.

God spoke through his servant Asaph and said,
"Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5)

God told them that he was not rebuking them for their sacrifices or burnt offerings, but he also wanted them to know some facts. So he said:
I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? (Psalm 50:9-13)

Outward expressions of our faith are good, but what God desires in our lives is inner purity. If we can give that to the Lord, he would be very pleased with us and answer our prayers. Jesus said,
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

The Apostle Paul says,

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians

4:8)

May the Holy Spirit help each one of us to purify ourselves with the Word of God so that we may continually experience the deliverance of God in our lives.

May 31

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43:18, 19)

Magicians rely on tricks to deliver their goods; the Lord of the heavens, he who created the heaven and the earth does not depend on such trivialities. He is neither limited by time or space or season. He is Almighty God and he can do miracles that have never happened before.

Would the splitting of the Red Sea rank as the greatest miracle on our list? Or would it be the parting of the Jordan? The change of bitter waters to sweet at Marah? Water gushing forth from the rock at Horeb? The fall of the walls of Jericho? The virgin birth? The feeding of the 5000? Turning of water into wine? The dead being raised up?

It's an infinite list considering the fact that God is still doing new things even today and many of us are recipients of the same. So what's in it for me? you may ask. That's what Martha, the sister of dead and buried Lazarus must have thought when Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25,26) Her brother was already dead; sure, he would rise at the resurrection, but what about her grief now?; if Jesus had come when they had called him to see sick Lazarus, perhaps he would have been alive today.

She didn't argue but gave Jesus the hard facts when they reached the tomb of Lazarus. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." (John 11:39) But Jesus thoughts were far from what she was thinking. Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40)

She did see the glory of God because when Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb, to everyones' amazement, he did come out...not dead but fully alive.

So will you believe that God can still do the impossible? Something new? Like it has never happened before? Just for you?

Believe and see the glory of God.

June 1

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:9)

We all desire commitment in our relationships and so does God. He wanted his first human creations Adam and Eve to be committed to him, but they fell short of his asking. Even in our lives God desires commitment on our part because he is committed to us totally from the time we acknowledge his sovereignty and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

When the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines in war, they were given this exhortation by the prophet:

And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." (1 Samuel 7:3)

In the above promise we see that God's eyes range throughout the earth for the purpose of strengthening those whose hearts are fully committed to him. Not only committed at prayer time or in church, not only while we are at home, not only at certain hours of the day; but always. Does seem like a tall order, doesn't it? Yet, it's possible, if we rearrange our priorities to please the Savior in all things. Everything matters right from the thoughts of our mind to our words and actions and dealings. It's a difficult task and we all fall sometimes in one way or the other.

But God knows whether the intents of our hearts are sincere; sincere to bring joy and glory to him. No one else may possibly know the intents of our hearts as a Christian; neither the spouse nor the minister nor anyone else; but God knows all. And if he sees that our hearts are fully committed to him, he will strengthen us at all times.

The Psalmist exhorts us in this manner:

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:5, 6)

June 2

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." (1 Samuel 1:17)

More of a blessing rather than a promise; yet a promise to which Hannah held onto till she received what she had asked of God. She had spent years in mental anguish because the LORD had closed her womb and her rival (Elkanah's other wife Peninnah) kept provoking her in order to irritate her. Even the priest Eli thought she was drunk, when actually she was praying in her heart and only her lips were moving and her voice was not heard.

A blessing or a promise can change a depressed person's outlook fast. As soon as she heard Eli's reassuring words, she was filled with new hope, for the Bible says, Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. (1 Samuel 1:18)

In her misery Hannah had made a vow to the Lord:

"O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." (1 Samuel 1:11)

God blessed Hannah with a son whom she named Samuel. She kept her vow to the Lord and gave Samuel to the Lord's work as soon as he was weaned.

Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD." Then they would go home. And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD. (1 Samuel 2:20, 21)

Hannah's womb was closed by the Lord, but when he opened it, Hannah had 6 children. Our God is an awesome God. Praise be to his holy name.

June 3

Like birds hovering overhead, the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it, he will 'pass over' it and will rescue it." (Isaiah 31:5)

God is your shield against the attacks of satan. The blood of Jesus is your protection. The enemy fears the blood of Jesus. It is oppressive and destructive to them. Every day, in prayer you must cover yourself, your family and everything that God has given you with the blood of Jesus.

Have you seen helicopters sent for protection of places against terrorists? They hover around the area repeatedly to spot the offenders to destroy them and protect the innocent.

In Psalm 7, the psalmist sings:

My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart. (Psalm 7:10)

Do you believe that God is your shield?

The Psalmist was sure of it, so he says,

The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:2)

God is watching over you and your family continuously because you have made him your refuge by accepting his only son Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

The Bible says,

He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless. (Proverbs 2:7)

Yes...If your walk is blameless, he is a shield for you and he holds victory in store for you. The satanic forces that come against you will continually be defeated. Praise the Lord.

June 4

Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:20)

Why did God often speak against Ephraim? Ephraim (the ten tribes) gives the answer to that.

'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God. After I strayed, I repented; after I came to

understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.' (Jeremiah 31: 18, 19)

They were like an unruly calf; without any self-control. They did as they pleased and God disciplined them. Like Ephraim, many believer's stray away from the Lord and then they fall prey to satanic attacks. Pain, shame and humiliation are what follow.

God has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us and lead us in the paths of righteousness. God says,

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. (Psalm 32: 8, 9)

The bit and bridle treatment is often painful to endure but God uses it so that we may not be eternally lost. God is merciful and the promise for today vouches for that.

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

Yes, God remembers us in our low estate and wants to renew his relationship with us even after we stray. He is always compassionate. He loves us with an everlasting love. May his name be glorified.

June 5

A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)

Are you as a believer, in the habit of refreshing others or are you in the habit of putting others off and bringing despair and grief to them? The promise for today states that he/she who refreshes others will himself/herself be refreshed. The book of Proverbs is a good guide on day to day righteous living and this is one of the promises that pertain to the generous. Another promise for the generous states that A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor. (Proverbs 22:9)

How generous can one be? The Apostle Paul cites an example when he wrote to the church at Corinth. He said,

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. (2 Corinthians 8: 1-5)

Out of the most severe trial.....they gave even beyond their ability. That's really admirable.

Not only with finances, we can be generous with our words and actions which will portray the love of Christ that we should have as Christians. Kind and encouraging words, a helping hand, a pat on the back, just sitting with someone who is suffering, listening to the woes of someone who is suffering and so many other things that may seem trivial but are

of great value to the recipient, are of paramount importance in the eyes of the Lord.

Jesus calls us to refresh others with our words and actions and the promise "he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" will come true to whoever obeys.

June 6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

In simple words, God honors faith. The question that God asks them who seek him earnestly for their difficulties/problems is, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied.

Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored.....(Matthew 9:27-30)

Jesus always had a word of praise for them who showed their faith to him with their words and actions. About the Roman centurion, he said,

"I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. (Matthew 8:10)

To the woman who had been suffering from bleeding for 12 years, he said, "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment. (Matthew 9:22)

To the Canaanite woman who pleaded with Jesus for her daughter, Jesus said, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matthew 15:28)

Do you believe that Jesus is able to do the miracle that you are seeking from him this day? If yes, then start praising him as if he has done it already, because he himself said, Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

And when your miracle happens, Jesus will have a word of praise for you too, because you showed him your faith.

June 7

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." (Jeremiah 17:7, 8)

Where does our confidence lie? Is it in our acquired knowledge, acquired strength or acquired money? These can help us to an extent but people who rely on only these often tend to fail miserably after a while. God has some advice regarding this for all. He says,

"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches." (Jeremiah 9:23)

Our breath is in the hands of the Almighty. He can give and he can take back this breath at his own discretion, so we do not have anything to glory in except in the Lord who has given us life breath.

Instead God advises us to boast about this: "let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,". (Jeremiah 9:24)

The Psalmists have this to say regarding trusting the Lord:

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:10)

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. (Psalm 13:5)

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. (Psalm 20:7)

If your confidence is in Jesus, you will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:31)

June 8

I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." (Matthew 26:13)

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. (Matthew 26:6-12)

Whatever we do for the Lord Jesus and his kingdom with love in our hearts is like beautiful fragrance in his presence. Here, the woman brought very expensive perfume which she poured on his head. What we offer for the expansion of God's kingdom here on earth may not be as costly as what the woman brought, but it has great value in the eyes of the Lord.

And Jesus' promise that "wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." has been proved true. It has been read & it has been preached about countless times.

So do not consider the work that you are doing for the Lord to be trivial. Do it with all your heart. You will be rewarded in the Lord's good time.

The Bible tells us,

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,

especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:9, 10)

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

June 9

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."(John 8:12)

Do you have the light of life? If you are following the light of the world 'Jesus', you will be the light of the world. Jesus said,
You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.(Matthew 5:14-16)

Darkness will have no dominion over you because the light of the "Son of God" will always shine upon you.

After Moses was in God's presence for 40 days, his face was radiant because he was in the presence of eternal light.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.

In Psalms 4, David prayed,
Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. (Psalms 4:6)

In Psalms 31, he again prays,
Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. (Psalms 31:16)

Asaph prays thrice in Psalms 80 for God's face to shine upon the Israelites. (3,7,19)

It should be our prayer each day that God's face which is brighter than the sun shines upon us, our families, our nation and the whole world so that darkness be dispelled continually. One of the blessings that God asked Aaron and his sons to bless the Israelites with was this:

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

And may God's face shine upon all you who read this.

June 10

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:27-29)

Jesus affirms that no one can snatch a believer (who listens to his voice and follows him) from his hand or his Father's hand. But there's always a possibility of a prodigal walking away from the hand of the Father and landing in grave trouble.

The protection remains as long as one abides in the shelter of the Most High, but once a believer moves out of the shelter, living a worldly life and indulging in things which are not pleasing to the Father, the shadows of darkness fall on his/her life and they suffer at the hands of the powers of darkness.

The story of the prodigal son as told by Jesus is relevant for our generation too. Believer's desire to be blessed by God in every sphere of their lives and God does bless, but then some fall away being unfaithful to the Father who gave them their heart's desire.

God blessed Israel and gave them promises that he gave no other nations. He made him ride on the heights of the land and fed him with the fruit of the fields. He nourished him with honey from the rock, and with oil from the flinty crag, with curds and milk from herd and flock and with fattened lambs and goats, with choice rams of Bashan and the finest kernels of wheat. You drank the foaming blood of the grape. (Deuteronomy 32: 13,14)

But they backslid, grieving the Lord who had rescued them from slavery. Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior. (Deuteronomy 32: 15)

We have much to learn from these examples. There's safety in the Lord's hands. If we move out of his protection, danger lurks at every corner. So let us be firm in our decision to hear the Lord's voice and follow him steadfastly.

June 11

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)

Jesus spoke about the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, defining his role in the lives of those who believed in Jesus and accepted him as Savior.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. (John 14: 16)

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14: 26)

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. (John 15: 26)

If you have trusted in Jesus and accepted him as Savior, the Counselor will start his work in your life. He will be with you always, he will teach you all things, he will testify about Jesus and he will remind you of what Jesus has said.

The Counselor has been given the task of helping us believer's reach eternity in heaven. He is there to guide us all along the way giving us wise counsel and leading us in the paths of righteousness. Sadly, some believer's do not know much about him, some others ignore

him. He wants to fellowship with us and tell us what Jesus desires in our lives.

As a believer, do you fellowship with your Counselor? Though you can't see him, he is always there to speak to you and guide you through the Word of God and through dreams and visions and will speak to you with his still small voice. It's a great experience once you start having fellowship with him. Just speak to him as though he were your close friend. His power will manifest through your lives. He is the spirit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He will help you with all things, whether great or small. As the Israelites were led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night in their journey to Canaan, so also the Holy Spirit will lead us in our journey to the heavenly Promised Land.

June 12

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. (Isaiah 28:16)

If you have trusted in the tested and precious cornerstone Jesus, you will not be dismayed. People in authority often oppress subordinates and get away with their mischief. Often God doesn't punish the miscreants immediately, but that doesn't mean he favors them. He has his day of judging and when his time comes, he deals with them. But God's faithful eyes are always on those who trust in him.

Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them. Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him. Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land." (Genesis 26:18-22)

Isaac trusted in God and his persistence despite opposition paid rich dividends. Trust in the Lord and look ahead. A shut door doesn't mean the end. It signals the opening of several doors for a child of God.

One of the Old Testament promises to the Israelites goes like this:

Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. (Isaiah 61:7)

Here's another exhortation from the author of Hebrews for you.

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. (Hebrews 6:12)

June 13

The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." (Judges 6:16)

The Lord's call for service often comes in the most unexpected of places. Gideon was not exactly in a "fasting & praying" session when the Lord called out to him through an angel. The following is what happened:

The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." (Judges 6:11-15)

To the question ""how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family", God answered and gave the promise--"I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

God's call for service in his kingdom can come at any age in a person's life. Jeremiah's call came when he was young and so also in the case of the prophet Samuel. But Moses and Aaron were called when they were in their 80's. I guess they were already in their retirement age.

If God calls you today, what will you reply? Hope your reply will be like what Isaiah said. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

June 14

She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'" (Judges 4:6, 7)

After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD. So the Lord gave them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who had nine hundred iron chariots and cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. So the Israelites cried to the LORD for help. And help came in the form of this prophecy uttered by Deborah, the prophetess.

God was going to lure Sisera and bring about his downfall.

After God gave Barak and Deborah victory over the Canaanites, they sang in this manner:

"Kings came, they fought; the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo, but they carried off no silver, no plunder. From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, the age-old river, the river Kishon. March on, my soul; be strong! (Judges 5:19-21)

The Lord will give you victory over the evil forces that are causing trouble in your life. Many times the enemy brings impediments to even small matters that involve believer's lives. This is to bring discouragement and despondency. But the Bible exhorts us in this manner:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

The enemy will not win because Jesus is on your side. He says,
The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Jesus loves you and he will give you victory.

June 15

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

The Bible says that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. More than man, evil powers fear God, because they know that they are utter failures when they confront God. The Apostle James writes,
You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder.
(James 2:19)

Though we see people ignoring Jesus and the Word of God and some living in utter rebellion to God, a day will come when they realize the truth that they ignored but then it will be too late. Perhaps it will only be at the White Throne judgement that some will realize to their dismay how foolish they were not to confess the name of Jesus while they lived here on earth.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

But, how blessed are they, who, while living here on earth, confess the name of the Lord Jesus and live for him. About them the Bible says,
Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6)

June 16

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10, 11)

God's word that goes out of the his mouth cannot be stopped in fulfilling what it has been sent to do; it accomplishes what God desires and it has been so from the beginning. When

God said, "Let there be light", light just came into being; no questions asked. No arguments entertained, even if there were any.

We read the following in Psalms 107:

Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:17-20)

When we pray, God sends his word and that brings healing, deliverance and peace. The word that God spoke during creation brought everything into being and we read in Genesis 1:

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good..... (Genesis 1:31)

The "let there be..." and "let the..." words spoken by God were so powerful that what was once "formless and empty and dark" became "very good". God, by his awesome power is able to change what is "formless and empty and dark" even in our lives into something "very good".

It's my prayer for you today that he may do such an awesome miracle for you in the coming days, that you praise his glorious name like the Israelites did when God delivered them. They sang in this manner:

When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. (Psalm 126:1-3)

June 17

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

Doesn't seem too complex a strategy to receive rewards from the heavenly Father. Simple on the surface but tough as well, because some believer's find time for everything else but prayer. Victory lies in being in the heavenly Father's presence and being sure that prayer for a specific request has been made in totality.

Go into your room, close the door.....Close the door and keep it closed till there is inner satisfaction that "prayer" has been complete. Only then open. There's often a tendency to rush to other things when in prayer. The door bell rings, the children call, things in the kitchen and a whole lot of other things mundane to be looked into. So close the door and if need be inform others that the door will remain closed till prayer is done with. Prayer is serious business and the diligent are rewarded.

Personal prayer is very important. Family and corporate (church/fellowship) prayers cannot replace the necessity to be alone in the Father's presence. Jesus set the example.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. (Mark 1:35)

Even in his time of intense distress, Jesus wanted to be alone in prayer.

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." (Matthew 26:36)

If one lacks a private room for private prayer, early mornings, when everything else is quiet, is the best time to get in touch with the Father.

The secret of success in Jesus' life and ministry was his prayer strategy and because he found it effective, he wanted all who believe in him, to follow it. The strategy is simple and if employed regularly can bring great rewards from the heavenly Father. So shall we invest some more time in private prayer??

June 18

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. (Matthew 7:24,25)

Great crowds followed Jesus when they saw him do miracles. Sicknesses were healed, demons were driven out, food and wine were provided miraculously. They wanted more. But when Jesus started preaching about God's requirements to enter the kingdom of heaven, there were few takers. We read in John Ch.6:

From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:66-69)

Hearing God's Word is not enough; Jesus said, we must put them into practice. But some believer's do not really grow in the Lord. Of these the writer of Hebrews said, In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. (Hebrews 5:12,13)

Is your spiritual life built on a rock solid foundation? If it is, then it will be stable when the wind blows against it.

When the rain comes down, the streams rise, and the winds blow and beat against your life; you will not fall, because your life has its foundation on the rock called Jesus.

The Bible exhorts us in this manner:

Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal. (Isaiah 26:4)

God will strengthen you and uphold you with his righteous right hand.

June 19

If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (2 Peter 2:9)

While speaking of God rescuing godly men from trials, the Apostle Peter mentions a couple of examples- that of Noah & Lot.

If he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was

distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)... (2 Peter 2:5-8)

After Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, king Darius who gave permission for the same, spent the night restlessly.

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" (Daniel 6:19,20)

And Daniel's answer was: My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O King." (Daniel 6:22)

The Bible says,

The Lord is a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall. (Isaiah 25:4)

Yes, the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials. If you have been going through trials these days and you have been thinking why you are going through it even when you have been living close to the Lord, be strengthened this day. The Lord who rescued Noah, Lot and Daniel will rescue you too.

June 20

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

The Bible is replete with examples of how God rewards them who have displayed their faith to the Almighty. One of the wonderful things that God does is that he uses simple things through which he displays his power. Things very ordinary, like the staff that Moses had been using for quite a few years. Little did he know about how God was going to transform that staff. While in Exodus 4:2 it is the "staff of Moses", by Exodus 4:20 it has become the "staff of God".

The "staff of Moses" did ordinary things like herding sheep and directing strays, but the "staff of God" helped to do extra-ordinary things like swallowing other staffs and splitting a sea. And imagine Moses' surprise when he threw his staff down at God's command. It became a snake; must have been some poisonous kind, for Moses ran from it.

How true then what the Apostle Paul writes to the Church at Corinth:

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, (1 Corinthians 1:27, 28)

Paul the Apostle exhorts Timothy regarding using his God given gifts:

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Timothy 1:6)

30 miracles with a staff. Wonderful. Excitement plus plus....
So what's that in your hands? the Lord asks. A pen, a guitar, a violin, a keyboard?
Whatever! Give it into my hands, let me bless it, the Lord says and let the miracles
flow.....

June 21

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:5, 6)

2 things: commit your way and then trust in him. Whatever the problem, first lay it at the Lord's feet and then trust in him that he will make a way where there seems no way.

The Israelites often fell into the hands of their enemies because of a lack of commitment to the Lord. During the times of Samuel, the prophet, they suffered at the hands of the Philistines. Samuel advised them to commit themselves afresh to the Lord. And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." (1 Samuel 7:3)

If you need continual deliverance from the enemy, you need to remain committed to the Lord. The Apostle Peter writes:

Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

And to escape his snares every believer needs to remain committed to the Lord.

Peter's advice to escape the devil's snare is this:

Resist him, standing firm in the faith..... (1 Peter 5:9)

And to stand firm in the faith, we need to remain committed to God and his Word.

The promise for today states- commit and trust- and the result will be- he will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Let that be a reality in your life.

June 22

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (Ephesians 1:4-6)

Great and wonderful are the ways of the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God. If you are in Christ today, the matter written above pertains to you. You have been chosen before the creation of the world in accordance with God's pleasure and will.

Writing to the Romans and the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul makes this very clear:

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

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who

works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:11, 12)

You have been in God's plan always. In the fullness of time, things happened. You believed the Word and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Not for a day or two but for eternity. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

This blessed hope is what should keep us going each day despite the troubles that we face day in and day out. May the Holy Spirit help and strengthen each of you who read this to wait patiently for that glorious day when you enter eternity and live with God forever.

June 23

But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. (Numbers 14:24)

Of the 12 leaders who went to explore the promised land only Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun gave a good report to Moses and the Israelites. The other 10 discouraged the people from going forth to possess the land. Instead they made plans of going back to Egypt.

Seeing that, Joshua and Caleb told the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

But the people wouldn't listen, angering God, who decided to destroy all the Israelites. But Moses interceded and thus God forgave their sin. Yet he sent a plague on the people who rebelled and they died.

God also made known his decision to the Israelites:
Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. (Numbers 14:30,31)

If God be for us who can be against us?
Have you the spirit of Joshua and Caleb? Willing to abide by God's Word? Being led by the Spirit of God?
If yes, you will enter the promised land (Heaven) in the fullness of God's time.

June 24

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? (Numbers 23:19)

Balaam, the false prophet was recruited by Balak, the Moabite king to curse Israel. But try as much as he would, Balaam was not able to curse the Israelites because God only gave words of blessing for him to pronounce. Initially, God did not want Balaam to go with the Moabite leaders to meet Balak, the king, but later seeing Balaam's eagerness, God allowed him to go but commanded him to speak only what God told him.

Balak was angry with Balaam for uttering words of blessing for the Israelites. Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!" He answered, "Must I not speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?" Then Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place where you can see them; you will see only a part but not all of them. And from there, curse them for me." So he took him to the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah, and there he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar. (Numbers 23:11-14)

The LORD met with Balaam and put a message in his mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this message." Balak asked him, "What did the LORD say?" Balaam replied, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it." (Numbers 23:19, 20)

No one's curse can harm you if God has decided to bless you. God will even bring words of blessing from the mouth of people who intend to curse you or have cursed you in the past. Our God is El Shaddai, Almighty God. Trust in him, he will never let you down.

June 25

The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Arameans think the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD.'" (1 Kings 20:28)

The king of Aram warred with the king of Israel, but he and his armies were defeated because God gave Israel victory. The Arameans investigated the cause of their defeat and came to the following conclusion:

"Their gods are gods of the hills. That is why they were too strong for us. But if we fight them on the plains, surely we will be stronger than they. (1 Kings 20:23)

God heard their talk about calling him "gods of the hills", though they did it out of ignorance, yet God proved to them that he is not only God of the hills but God of the plains too; in fact he is God Almighty; omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent.

God sent a prophet to give the king of Israel the promise that we read in the title verse here. Compared to the vast Aramean army, the Israelite army was very small. When the Israelites were also mustered and given provisions, they marched out to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside. (1 Kings 20:27)

Yet the Lord fought for Israel and defeated the Arameans. The Israelites inflicted a hundred thousand casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day. The rest of them escaped to the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty-seven thousand of them.

The enemy that you face today may be stronger than you but can never match the strength of Immanuel- Jesus Christ who is with you at all times. Remember, the battle is the Lord's and he will fight for you as he fought for Israel. The victory is your's so PRAISE THE LORD.

June 26

He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy. (Proverbs 14:21)

Our God is a just God. He is righteous. Therefore whether a person is a believer or not, he maintains his righteousness within the bounds of his Word. The above promise speaks of blessings for those who are kind to the needy.

There are many who do good and help the poor and needy. Some of them build homes for the poor, open charitable institutions for orphans and the aged and run hospitals and care centers for the destitute. God rewards them while they live here on earth with things that he thinks is appropriate.

There are several verses in the Bible which speak of God rewarding those who are kind to the poor and needy. Several blessings are pronounced on them in the Word of God. A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor. (Proverbs 22:9)

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing.....(Proverbs 28:27)

Some people ask, "Why God himself doesn't feed or help the poor"? That's because he expects those to whom he has given much to give to them. And if we look at it from another angle, "What everyone has is all given by God."

If everyone realizes that what they have is all a gift from God, then surely their outlook will be different.

God gave the Israelites a lot of blessings which are detailed in Deuteronomy 8. But he also warned them saying, You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth..... (Deuteronomy 8:18)

This wonderful verse from the book of Proverbs should sum it all up regarding what our attitude should be towards the poor and needy:

He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done. (Proverbs 19:17)

June 27

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. (Isaiah 51:6)

Ain't the day near when the above prophesy will be fulfilled? Everything seems to be going

on as usual though. Countries and country heads are laboring to establish peace. Terrorists and unholy elements are working in the reverse. Economic ups and downs, the rat race being slowed just a bit and giving way for the arms race. Global warming is taking its toll on this earth that was created by God Almighty. As the Word prophesies, so it will be: the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies.

We read in the book of Joel:

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

But there's the silver lining to this dark cloud prophesy. God says, But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

To you who have believed in the triune God and accepted Jesus as your personal Savior and are living for him, the sun of righteousness will shine permanently.

The Bible says,

"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. (Malachi 4: 1,2)

May the Holy Spirit of God prepare each one of us who have believed in Jesus for that glorious day when we meet our Lord and Savior and be with him forever.

June 28

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

The Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to make war on Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord. Jehoshaphat praised God for his strength and might and recounted the great deliverances God had wrought for his people and then he confessed: We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.

As they fasted, prayed and praised God, the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel. He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them.....'"

(2 Chronicles 20: 15,16)

And then came the promise that we read in the title verse.

You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the

deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you. (2 Chronicles 20:17)

The next morning, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."
As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

God gave a great victory to king Jehoshaphat and to the people of Judah because they trusted in him despite the odds being against them. They followed God's plan as given by Jahaziel and their fastings, prayers and praise paid off.
God loves the praises of his people. If you are in a situation like what king Jehoshaphat found himself in, start praising God. He is able to perform yet another miracle to save you.

June 29

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. (Lamentations 3:22)

The Apostle Paul writing to the Ephesians says,
And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

Paul here comments regarding the love of Christ and says that this love surpasses knowledge. The question that we can ask ourselves is...have we grasped how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ?
Truly it is immeasurable. He chose to die so that we could live eternally with him in heaven. He gave away all the glory that he had so that we could share in his glory.

Paul writing to the Philippians sums up the sacrifice of Jesus for our sake:
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

made himself nothing...humbled himself....became obedient to death...

That love cannot be measured, but it can be amply experienced by those who put their trust in him. And because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.

June 30

I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. (Genesis 6:17,18)

In a whole generation, God found one righteous man and made a covenant with him.

The Bible says,

Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. (Genesis 6:8,9)

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Hebrews 11:7)

Notable here is that 7 others escaped the great flood because of this 1 man finding favor in God's eyes. God cares for the family. He could have just saved Noah because of his righteous nature and blamelessness, but he didn't do that. He had compassion on the others in Noah's family. None of them are mentioned to be having Noah's great qualities yet they escaped the wrath of God because God didn't want this righteous man to be without them after the flood.

What would have been Noah's condition if his wife and children perished in the flood and he alone escaped? It would have been something like Naomi returning from Moab without her husband and 2 sons. She asked others to call her "Mara" instead of calling her Naomi, because of all the bitter experiences that she had to go through.

Of course she found restoration through Ruth and Boaz, but that took some time.

Are you in a family? Love each other because God loves you despite your shortcomings. Are you the only one saved? God will have mercy on the others when you pray for them. Are you all saved? Live as children of the light and glorify God.

July 1

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7,8)

O Dear Jesus, If only you answered my prayers! is a heart cry that often goes out from our beings. We pray and then wait, thinking of what the delay is all about when we do not see the answer to our prayers.

But Jesus promises us that he will not keep putting us off. He will see that we get justice...and how? Quickly, of course!

What have you been praying to the Lord and now are waiting for him to answer? Take heart, for the promise that you read now is just for you. God is about to bring justice for you, his chosen one.

Some of the desperate prayers that the Psalmists prayed go like this:

Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble. (Psalm 69:17)

Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. (Psalm 102:2)

Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be

like those who go down to the pit. (Psalm 143:7)

Do you believe that he is able to do what you have asked for? If yes, then you will see his miraculous power manifest in your life once again. God loves you and because of that he sent his only son Jesus to the cross, so that you may be able to experience the eternal riches of his love. The Bible says,
He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

So be strengthened this day dear brother/sister, for the Lord is about to answer your prayers in a way that only he can.

July 2

Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria." (2 Kings 7:1)

The Israelites were in dire straits. The famine was taking its toll. People were eating anything that they could lay their hands on. Some had even resorted to cannibalism. The king was desperate. He laid all the blame on the prophet Elisha and wanted him killed. In the midst of all this chaos, the merciful Lord gave a wonderful prophecy through the prophet Elisha promising food for all in 24 hours time.

People couldn't believe their ears. Some kept quiet, but one with unbelief spoke and that resulted in his death.

The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?" "You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!" (2 Kings 7:2)

Suppose in the midst of a great crisis, whatever it be, the Lord speaks to you and says, "I will deliver you in a day's time", would you believe it?

Faith would say, "Yes Lord, you are mighty to save, even this moment." and wait for the miracle praising God till it happened.

On the other hand, unbelief would see one questioning the validity of the voice or reason in human terms regarding whether this was possible after all.

God is faithful and once he promises, he never goes back on it. He sees to it that he fulfills his promise.

What Elisha said came true. God used 4 lepers to fulfill his promise.

Wait for the miracle. Praise God for it. Don't worry about how it will come to pass. God has more than a 1000 ways to do everything. He will bring it to pass.

July 3

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring - not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (Romans 4:16)

Faith and grace are so inter-linked in everything concerning the life of a believer. Even regarding salvation, the Apostle Paul writes to the Church at Ephesus:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8,9)
Salvation is the most precious gift from God, but there are other wonderful gifts, which result from our latching on to the promises of God in his Word.

Regarding Abraham, Paul writes,
If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about - but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:2,3)

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (Romans 4:13)

So it was neither through works or the law that Abraham was justified. It was because he believed God. That was credited to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:17 is a wonderful verse which speaks of El Shaddai- God Almighty and his unsurpassed greatness.

.....He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed - the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. (Romans 4:17)

Do you believe that you serve Him who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were? If yes, your faith will be credited as righteousness and you will see the mighty acts of God throughout your life as a believer.

July 4

**He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.
(Psalm 145:19)**

Do you fear the Lord? Not as fearing something that seems to be dangerous to you, but fearing because he is Almighty and worthy of respect and honor and awe.
The Bible has much to say regarding blessings for those who have 'fear of the Lord'.
A few verses in this respect would do us good.

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

The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short. (Proverbs 10:27)

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

The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:23)

The fear of the Lord leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble. (Proverbs 19:23)

Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

With so many blessings attached to 'fear of the Lord', it should be the endeavor of each one of us to develop this most important characteristic and stick to it as long as we live.
May the Holy Spirit help us in this.

July 5

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. " (Genesis 15:1)

The meaning of the word 'reward' is generally given as "that which is given in return for good or evil done or received; esp., that which is offered or given in return for some service or attainment, as for excellence in studies, for the return of something lost." Thinking in these terms, "What had Abraham done to receive God as a reward?" The Bible says, "Abraham obeyed God". Whatever God told him to do, he did. So did Noah and the other saints of whom we read about in the Bible.

God becomes our reward when we obey him. There is no greater reward than having God himself in our lives. The Psalmist says,
I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing. (Psalm 16:2)
Can we say that? He again says,
Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure.
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. (Psalm 16:5,6)

The inheritance that God has kept for us in eternity is delightful and we must look forward to the day when we can experience it first hand. So let us all obey the exhortation that Paul the Apostle gives the church at Colosse.
Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
(Colossians 3:1-4)

July 6

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. (Proverbs 4:18)

Most of us desire that God blesses us and our families with diverse blessings, but blessings that we ask of God do not come all at once. Why so? when God is All powerful and Almighty? Surely he has the authority and resources to give us all that we ask; immediately.

Have you seen the sun rise? Does it just pop up right above where you are standing early in the morning? No, it slowly rises in the east, what the writer of the above promise calls the 'first gleam of dawn.' And then it has a course to travel through the day to the west where it sets finally.

The path of the righteous can also be traced similarly according to this promise and as the sun shines brightly and at its maximum intensity, so does the one who obeys the Word of God and live according to it.

Shining brightly for Christ wherever one is. At home, at the work place, in church or wherever one be. The light of Christ will shine through the believer who is willing to follow the righteous path.

Right from the book of Genesis, we see that God desires to bless them who are willing to obey him. He has not changed and never will. The righteous will surely be blessed, slowly but surely, like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

The Bible says,

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12:3)

So, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

July 7

Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." (John 5:17)

If you have been misguided by people into thinking that God is sitting up there in the heavens doing nothing while you battle it out here on earth, here's a clarification and a promise for you from Jesus himself. Infact, this was Jesus' answer to the Jews who persecuted him because he was healing people on the Sabbath.

We cannot limit God's acts according to our thinking, but it's also true that God doesn't do things contrary to his written Word.

An invalid man had been lying by the pool of Bethesda for 38 years and God chose a particular day to heal him. That he chose the Sabbath to heal was not by mistake but by intention to prove that he is the Lord of the Sabbath too. Yet the Jews rarely understood his intentions and instead of praising God for the astounding miracle, they chose to persecute Jesus.

On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus. (Luke 6:6-11)

If you have been passing through troubled times and seeing no immediate answer to your prayers, remember, God is not sitting inert and doing nothing about your matter. He is working and so is Jesus, to whom God has given all authority in heaven and on earth and under the earth. There will surely be a change for the good.

Hope and trust in the Lord. No good will he withhold from those whose walk is upright.

"Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

July 8

My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. (Isaiah 32:18)

How we all long for peaceful dwelling places, secure homes and undisturbed places of rest.

But it's so difficult, considering the chaos all around us. Wars, terrorism, contagious sicknesses and wickedness proliferating day by day and squeezing out whatever peace is left. But God has a promise for those whose hope is in him. A new kingdom will soon be theirs, where they can live in peace.

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. (Isaiah 32:17)

Isaiah prophesies that the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

The Apostle Peter writes,

But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:13)

World leaders are trying to harvest peace when the Bible prophesies trouble in the end times. But a child of God, can always, with confidence, say what the Psalmist said, I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1,2)

He/She can also affirm what David, the psalmist and great king of Israel said when he passed through troubled times:

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8)

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. (Psalm 3:5)

July 9

He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you." (Exodus 15:26)

Nice promise (among others) related to healing that one can meditate on when one is sick. I can't see 2 meanings in what God told the Israelites then. Plain and simple....He said, "I am the Lord, who heals you."

Our Lord is "the healer" whether some people agree with it or not. Ask them who have experienced his healing touch and they will tell you its 100% true. I for one can vouch that he is "the healer" despite having prescribed medicines for the past 23 years.

Medicines and surgery play a great role in relief from sicknesses, but there are a plethora of sicknesses for which man hasn't yet found a cure. Even in those cases God is able and he does heal.

The Psalmist prayed;

Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony. (Psalm 6:2)

I said, "O LORD, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you." (Psalm 41:4)

When King Hezekiah was sick and at the point of death, he prayed to God and God answered him saying: "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD.

(2 Kings 20:5)

Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever and the healings that we read of in the Gospels and in the book of Acts still happen when men and women pray with faith. He is an unchanging God. If you are sick or feeling weak in your body, meditate on the promises of healing and deliverance found in the Word Of God. Experience his miraculous touch and glorify him.

July10

Then the Lord said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you." (Exodus 34:10)

Our God is a God who is faithful to the covenants he makes with those who seek him. Here he is making a covenant with Moses and the Israelites that he will demonstrate his power among the nations that his people were going to live. Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant - the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:28)

The Israelites were to obey the words of the covenant, if God was to fulfill the promises associated with it.

Obedience was what God expected, so he told Moses:

Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. (Exodus 34:11)

Whenever we are pestered by satanic forces, the first thing to check in our lives is whether we are living in obedience to God and his Word. This is because we cannot get victory over the evil powers if we are disobeying God. James writes this very clearly in his book.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:7,8,10)

There can be no resisting the devil without submitting to God and his Word. If we want to be constantly victorious in our battle with the devil, we must always live a life submitted to God's Word.

It's my prayer for you today that God the Holy Spirit may help you in that.

July 11

The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. (1 Corinthians 3:8)

Your labor for the Lord will be rewarded. Perhaps you are working in obscurity, without anyone knowing or acknowledging your work, but know this that everything is seen and accounted by the Lord. Your efforts are written down in God's books and you will receive your reward at God's chosen time.

Even though the Apostle Paul writes that, I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. (1 Corinthians 3:6,7), it doesn't mean that God doesn't care or that he doesn't give weightage to your work. It simply means that without the Lord, we cannot achieve anything.

Pray that whatever you do for the Lord be a success. In Psalm 90, we read the Psalmist Moses praying for success.

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands. (Psalm 90:17)

Our purpose is to extend the kingdom of God here on earth and bring glory to his name. For that we labor, where-ever we are and in whatever calling the Lord has given us. No work is trivial when seen through God's eyes. What he looks for in his servants is faithfulness.

So be strengthened this day, dear servant of the Most High, for the Lord appreciates what you are doing for his glory.

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

July 12

The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame. (Zephaniah 3:5)

How wonderful!! The prophet writes "Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail.."

So if you have been waiting for justice to be done in your case, here's your promise. God is righteous and he does no wrong. Many of his ways are not easily understood by us because of our finite minds, yet we can assure ourselves that he will dispense justice in our favor as we continually trust in him.

The Bible speaks at great length regarding the righteousness and justice of God.

The Lord is known by his justice..... (Psalm 9:16)

For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face. (Psalm 11:7)

The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. (Psalm 33:5)

God has a special promise for them who commit their way to him and trust in him:

He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. (Psalm 37:6)

Another eternal promise is found in the above psalm and that should assure us that all is right because we have trusted in Jesus.

For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off; the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. (Psalm 37:28, 29)

July 13

O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. (Isaiah 30:19)

Is it possible that the Lord answers us as soon as he hears our prayers or as soon as we cry for help??

Yes. Definitely. He is able to answer and he does answer in such a way, as is evidenced in several instances in the Word of God. To quote a few...

Having killed a 1000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, Samson cried out to the Lord..."You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore, and it is still there in Lehi. (Judges 15:18,19)

King Asa of Judah had an army of around 6 lakh soldiers and he was attacked by Zerah, the Ethiopian who had an army of 10 lakh soldiers.

Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you....The LORD struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled, (2 Chronicles 14:11,12)

King Ahab of Israel deceived King Jehoshaphat by asking him to go into battle wearing royal garments while he himself wore ordinary clothes so that the enemy army may not identify him.

Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel." When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "This is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him, (2 Chronicles 18:31)

Eleazer, the servant of Abraham was out searching a bride for Isaac and he prayed to the Lord.... "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today....

See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too' - let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. (Genesis 24:12-15)

There are many many more events in the Bible where God immediately answered the prayers of the needy. Trust in him to answer you in the same way.

July 14

Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. (Hosea 2:14,15)

God is All Powerful and he can change what was once a valley of trouble into a door of hope. "Achor" in Hebrew means "trouble." Achan's sin (Joshua Chapter 7) of stealing things devoted to destruction brought calamity to him and his family. He stole a beautiful

robe, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels and hid it under the ground in his tent when God had expressly forbidden that. Joshua who was not aware of this was defeated in battle in the conquest of Ai, because of this sin.

God said,

Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. (Joshua 7:11)

Finally Achan was caught and we read in the book of Joshua...

Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today." Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since. (Joshua 7:25,26)

In Hosea, we read that God was going to make the "Valley of Achor a door of hope". For Israel which had sinned repeatedly by committing all kinds of sins and wickedness, there was still hope, for God was going to open for them a door of hope.

Making the Valley of Achor/ Valley of Trouble, a door of hope, is something only God Almighty can do. It means that the place where you saw defeat and distress will become a "door of hope" for you and your family. Can you believe that?

A place where you were ridiculed will become a place where you will bloom again because the Lord has loved you with an ever-lasting love.

July 15

The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. (Isaiah 41:18)

The water miracles in the Bible are many and some of them are quite astounding, like this one.

The Israelite community camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. (Exodus 17)

We are not talking here of God providing water to a couple of hundred people. The community was quite large, with 6 lakh men itself; counting the women and children would put the figure at 15-20 lakhs.

Moses was given a command and he obeyed it. God proved to the Israelites once again that he is Almighty and All Sufficient.

Here are 2 verses from the book of Isaiah, one a past happening and one a future promise;

They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and water gushed out. (Isaiah 48:21)

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. (Isaiah 49:10)

As a child of this Almighty God, you can also boldly say what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians.

My God will meet all your (my) needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

July 16

I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will guide him and restore comfort to him. (Isaiah 57:18)

A promise perhaps to a person, more likely to the nation Israel which was sick spiritually. Spiritual sickness is worse than the physical, because the physical is temporary while the spiritual has permanent implications. Covetousness and idolatry had made the nation sick and God was promising to heal when he saw their repentance.

There are 3 promises in this single verse. God was going to heal, guide and restore comfort. All these are what we all desire in our lives and if we live a life of continual repentance, God is always ready to give these.

Here again the "fear of the Lord" is so very important. The Psalmist David exhorts us in this manner:

Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. (Psalm 25:12, 14)

Some believers trivialize sin and live in it justifying themselves saying that "after all we are human." But neither God nor the Bible supports that point of view. If we desire healing, guidance and comfort in our lives, we must make it a point to check our spiritual life everyday. God loves us, but neither he nor his Word has changed. God called Abraham to serve him at age 75, but even at age 99, God had this to say to Abraham.

"I am God Almighty ; walk before me and be blameless. (Genesis 17:1)

That's what God wants from us too.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen each of us to live a blameless life. Healing, guidance and comfort from the Most High will then be ours.

July 17

Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. (Zechariah 9:12)

The redeeming grace of Almighty God is wonderfully portrayed in this great promise to God's people who were in Babylonian captivity. True that they were prisoners; but prisoners of hope. They were now free to return to their homeland but they had nothing to bank on. All they had was destroyed by the ravages of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Their homes, their fields, their temple; all lay in ruins.

Yet, they had a promise to hold on to. The God against whom they had sinned resulting in their captivity had forgiven them and was willing to restore them. In fact, he was willing to

restore twice as much to them.

Believers are in a way, prisoners of hope. As Paul the Apostle says, For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. (Philippians 1:21-23)

Problems in life often brings despair to the believer, yet we have hope that Jesus will not leave us nor forsake us in any circumstance. Even when we sin and punishment comes into our lives, we can always be sure that the Lord will forgive us when we repent and bear fruit that comes from a repentant heart.

Carried away by the enemy and living in a foreign land humbled the Israelites. They repented of their sins and cried out to God who was ready to forgive them. God effected their deliverance and they returned to their own country as "prisoners of hope."

God loves you and is able to restore twice as much of what you have lost.

July 18

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:1)

There's promise of life in Christ Jesus. Yes, eternal life is promised through him who said, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." And in this context Jesus was teaching the Sadducees about the resurrection. He said, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead - have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Matthew 22:30-32)
Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, though they had died physically when their time on earth was up, they were living eternally, according to these words of Jesus.

Jesus affirmed that again when he spoke to Martha, Lazarus sister. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die....." (John 11:25, 26)

If fact, in the gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly spoke of the promise of eternal life that comes through believing in him.
Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." (John 3:36)

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40)

If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and are living for him, this promise of eternal life will come true in your lives sooner or later. How blessed and glorious will that day be! Here's a great verse of exhortation to all of us who have put our trust in Jesus.

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (Jude 1:21)

July 19

He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end." (Hebrews 1:10-12)

The unchanging nature of God is very wonderfully portrayed here by the author of Hebrews. God remains the same even though his creations come into being and then disappear. Many are they who have mouthed sarcasm at the Eternal One but eventually have fulfilled what the Bible says about their actual state.

".....for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19)

The Lord himself proclaims,

"I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. (Malachi 3:6)

The Apostle Paul rightly describes the unmatched qualities of this mighty God when he writes to Timothy.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)

The Bible says,

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17)

Yes, he is the only God & he is eternal & immortal, whether anyone believes it or not. Sadly, there are many who live rebelliously to the divine authority and have to endure eternal punishment for their folly. Many argue about this matter, but the Bible says, For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

And to them who believe in this only eternal and unchanging and immortal God, he has promised the greatest blessing through his son Jesus Christ--ETERNAL LIFE.

July 20

The days of the blameless are known to the LORD, and their inheritance will endure forever. In times of disaster they will not wither; in days of famine they will enjoy plenty. (Psalm 37:18,19)

One thing that the Lord delights in is when he sees that we are living a blameless life. In the Old Testament, we read the Israelites being exhorted to live a blameless life.

You must be blameless before the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 18:13)

But is it really possible for one to be found blameless in the presence of a pure & holy

God? Perhaps difficult, but this is what we read about some saints of old. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. (Genesis 6:9)

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. (Job 1:1)

God demands blamelessness in our lives. It is not optional. That's what he demanded from Abraham several thousand years back.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty ; walk before me and be blameless. (Genesis 17:1)

There are blessings innumerable in the Word of God for those who live a blameless life serving the living God. Here are a few...

The days of the blameless are known to the LORD, and their inheritance will endure forever. (Psalm 37:18)

Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace. (Psalm 37:37)

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. (Psalm 84:11)

He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, (Proverbs 2:7)

Shall we then take a decision today as the Psalmist did long back?

I will be careful to lead a blameless life.....I will walk in my house with blameless heart. (Psalm 101:2)

Remember....He holds victory in store for the upright; he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless. (Proverbs 2:7)

July 21

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27,28)

We should if not everyday, ask ourselves often, this very pertinent question... Are we waiting for the coming of the Lord?

After Jesus' resurrection, as his disciples watched him ascend to heaven, two angels asked: "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

Jesus himself told his disciples...

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:3)

We read in the book of Revelation,

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." (Revelation 16:15)

Dear friend, Jesus is coming back and that too very soon...moreover he is coming

unexpectedly. Are you ready to meet him? He has this to say to you today...

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.

For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36)

"...he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." This promise will be fulfilled soon.

July 22

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? (James 2:5)

Your bank balance doesn't look healthy! It's a matter of perpetual concern! So what's to be done?

Here's something that the Lord Almighty wants you to remember. He says, As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. (Joshua 1:5)

Be strong and courageous.... (Joshua 1:6)

Be strong and very courageous....(Joshua 1:7)

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

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

Can you believe that? The God who provided for the Israelites in the wilderness is still the same.

The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan. (Exodus 16:35)

The manna stopped the day after they ate the food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan. (Joshua 5:12)

Times have changed but the Lord Almighty is just the same, caring and providing for those who trust in him. He is Jehovah Jireh, our Provider.

In times of doubt and unbelief, latch on to the Lord's promises.

He will never leave you nor forsake you. Some of what you need, he will provide through natural means and some supernaturally.

July 23

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

Marching against the 5 Amorite kings to save the Gibeonites, Joshua was given this promise by God. After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took the enemy by surprise. The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. As they fled before Israel, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the

sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites. On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel: "O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day.

Not only to Joshua, God gives you a promise this day, that the satanic forces that are troubling you will not be able to withstand you.

Wear the full armor of God and resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)

Extinguish all his fiery darts with the shield of faith that God has given you. War against the evil forces with the "Sword of the Spirit- The Word of God" and the victory will be yours. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

July 24

If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile,' I still dread all my sufferings, for I know you will not hold me innocent. (Job 9:27, 28)

Job wanted to desperately smile despite his misery, yet he knew that it was not going to be a "smile because of true joy" but a "smile that momentarily hid his pain"

Interestingly; behind many a smile hides many sorrows. You experience it at some time or the other in this life that we live on earth.

Job had tried to prove himself innocent before God. He had no lawyer, so he argued his case with his friends and with the Almighty.

It didn't seem to be working though.

It is easy figuring things out when all is going well for the believer. Then comes a time when things go wrong and you can't figure out anything. There will be no dearth of advice though, yet nothing will work till God holds out the golden scepter.

Job finally was set free from his misery not because of his arguments, but because God's time of deliverance had arrived.

The Bible says,

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; (Psalm 103:13)

The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. (Psalm 116:5)

How's the situation now? Too late you may say, as Mary and Martha said when Jesus came to Bethany to raise up Lazarus. Hang on...Just hang on...Deliverance may just be around the corner, so hang on to the faith that you have left, even though it may be as fragile as a single strand of thread. Don't give up.

July 25

"I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. (Job 42:2)

Job here has finally realized that whatever God decides to do, he brings it into being. No one can thwart what he purposes to do. That means whatever he has decided for you as a child of God, he will bring it to fulfillment. no one can thwart what he has purposed for you. As a New Testament believer, you must remember what Jesus has said regarding you; you, who has believed that Jesus is your Good Shepherd.

Jesus said,

".....I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

That's the plan and purpose that God has regarding you. But how can one have an "abundant life" in the midst of such terrible problems that plague our world? Quite an "enigma". Yet if we lean on the Lord for all the small and big things of our life, we can surely experience this "abundant life" that Jesus is talking about. That's why in the same chapter Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, (John 10:14) and also

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; (John 10:27)

Jesus, here is talking about a personal relationship where his sheep hear his voice. This is not a one time experience but a life long relationship. If we are willing to enter into such an relationship, only then we can experience the "abundant life" that Jesus spoke of.

His plans for you are concrete and they are for your blessing; to give you a hope and a future.

July 26

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

A great promise of restoration to a people who were suffering at the hands of the enemy. God's own people were now being called "an outcast." It was like no one cared for them. Everyone seemed to have forsaken them and they were feeling very low.

As Gideon, one of the men whom God chose to be a judge of Israel once asked:

"But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." (Judges 6:13)

Israelites had sinned and so God had given them into the hands of the enemy then. But sometimes we may not find any explanation to the sufferings that we go through.

"Why God lets us suffer even when we are sure that we are not doing anything wrong" is a question that haunts many believers.

Not everything is explainable, but the promises of God are for us in times of suffering and finally he will grant the deliverance that we are so eager to have. The Bible says,

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:10)

Restoration is guaranteed, so hold fast to his promises.

You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. (Psalm 102:13)

July 27

Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed [to the LORD] all his life. (2 Chronicles 15:17)

Hearts fully committed to the Lord are hard to find, but such have a special blessing from the Lord. He is always there to strengthen them in times of trouble and distress.

The Psalmist says:

But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love. (Psalm 33:18)

Again in Psalm 34, we read,

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry. (Psalm 34:15)

Commitment is difficult but it pays dividends. Athletes who win top spots really put in a lot of hard work to achieve success.

The Apostle Paul referring to this writes:

No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer. Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:4,5)

Writing to the church at Corinth, Paul again says,

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. (1 Corinthians 9:25)

That's what all of us believers are hoping for! Aren't we? A crown that will last for ever. And a crown that will last forever is what we will receive--that is--if our hearts are committed to the Lord.

July 28

Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive." (Genesis 46:29, 30)

What a day it must have been for Jacob! Unbelievable, to say the least. The events that transpired must have confused him a lot as he traveled to Egypt to see his long lost son. But the voice of the Lord strengthened him.

"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely

bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes." (Genesis 46:3, 4)

How wonderful it is when the Lord comforts us and strengthens us with his words. Notable are the words: "I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again."

Jacob, now old and tired of all that he had faced in his life needed God's affirmation of his presence with him and that is exactly what God did.

In verse 30 above, we read Jacob telling Joseph: "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

The Bible says,
Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12)

That's exactly what Jacob had experienced in his life. Now he was content after a long, long wait.

Are you waiting for something to happen? Something that you greatly desire, but not yet received? Take heart. The Lord will fulfill your desire as he fulfilled Jacob's.

How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. (Psalm 31:19)

July 29

The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel." When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "This is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him, for when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him. But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told the chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." (2 Chronicles 18:29-33)

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, who was God fearing made an unholy alliance with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. This almost killed him, but for the mercy of the Lord. The Lord drew the enemy away from him and he was saved. But look what happened to the wicked king who devised the plan to save himself in war by making Jehoshaphat look like the king that the enemy were after. The Bible says, "someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor"

It was not just something that happened by chance. It was God's judgment on the wicked king.

Are you in an unholy alliance? It may lead to your downfall. Cry to the Lord for mercy and he will save you as he saved Jehoshaphat.

The Bible is very clear regarding unholy alliances. the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians says,
"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness

have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Being yoked together with unbelievers, wickedness, darkness, Belial, Idols... all these are definite danger signals for the believer. Check your life this day. Keep yourself clean.

July 30

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. (Ezra 1:1, 2)

Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites - everyone whose heart God had moved - prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:5)

From these verses, we can learn of a very important fact- The Lord moves hearts. He does it so that his plans and purposes are brought into fulfillment. After Solomon's temple had been destroyed and the Israelites had gone into captivity for 70 years, we see God moving the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to send the Israelites back to their land and give them permission to build the temple at Jerusalem.

God is sovereign and he can move the hearts of men to act favorably towards his children. He can devise circumstances in ways that tend to bring about deliverance for his children.

The Lord gave Pharaoh dreams which finally led to the exaltation of Joseph. The Lord is righteous and he won't sit idle when he sees ruthless and wicked men trouble his children. Sometimes he forces them to set free his children as he did in the case of the Pharaoh and the Israelites who were in bondage for 430 years.

Are you suffering because of you being subordinate to others, whether that be in your workplace or in the ministry? Take heart this day. The Lord is going to move the hearts of men these coming days and they are going to speak in your favor. They will set you free because God is going to bring such circumstances in their lives that they will be forced to set you free. Do you believe this?

Remember what the Lord Jesus told Martha,
"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40)

Believe in the Lord's words. He's going to set you free.

July 31

I have become a laughingstock to my friends, though I called upon God and he answered - a mere laughingstock, though righteous and blameless! (Job 12:4)

When God's answer to our prayer is delayed, this is how some of our friends and relatives treat us. Perhaps some of them may not be calling upon God even half of what we do and the situation is often baffling to us as it was to Job.

Job was in great distress and this is what the Bible says about his friends:

When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was. (Job 2:11-13)

Their intentions and grief seemed to be genuine & sincere for 1 week, but when they opened their mouths, it was accusation and judgment that they proclaimed upon Job.

Sometimes one gets fed up of listening to "It's all your fault", "It's all your fault" all the time. So what's to be done??

The prophet Jeremiah writes,

I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. (Lamentations 3:24-26)

Jesus is righteous and He will bring deliverance to you at the right time putting all those who falsely accused you to shame. Trust in Him. He's a wonderful Savior.

August 1

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. (Romans 8:11)

This is a great promise that the Bible gives to every believer. The promise of being resurrected. The word "resurrection" is found 40 times in the New Testament and it has great significance in relation to the Christian belief. The Apostle Paul says, "But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (1 Corinthians 15:12-14)

There are many Christians who do not believe in the resurrection. They are like the Sadducees of old, who did not believe in it either. But the Bible is very emphatic regarding this and talks of the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation."

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life;

and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28,29)

The program of the resurrection is clearly outlined in the Word of God.

1. The resurrection of Christ is the beginning- 1 Corinthians 15:23
2. The resurrection of the church age believers at the rapture- 1 Thessalonians 4:16
3. The resurrection of the tribulation period saints (Revelation 20:3-5) and the resurrection of Old Testament saints (Daniel 12:2) at the 2nd coming of Christ.
4. The final resurrection of the unsaved dead- Revelation 20:5, 11-14

The first three would be all included in the first resurrection or the resurrection to life and the fourth would be the second resurrection or the resurrection unto damnation.

And the Bible tells us,

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6)

August 2

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, (Psalm 92:12-14)

Besides drink, food and shade, palm trees provide material needed for housing, thatching, hats, baskets, furniture, mats, cordage, clothing, charcoal, brooms, fans, ornaments, musical instruments, shampoo, containers, implements and oil for fuel, light, ointments, soap and more. Perhaps this is what the psalmist had in mind when he said that the righteous will flourish like a palm tree. He was looking at the abundant fruitfulness that they can have.

And then he compares their growth to that of a cedar. The flag of Lebanon features a cedar in green which is a reference to the famous cedars of Lebanon, renowned throughout the region. The Lebanon Cedar is an evergreen coniferous tree growing up to 40 m (130 ft) tall. To put it concisely, "The spiritual growth of a believer has no limits and can reach heights greater than the cedars of Lebanon."

The psalmist then tells us that, for this to happen, the believer has to be planted in the house of the Lord, because all the nourishment for his/her spiritual life comes from him/her being in the presence of the Lord. And when that is taken care of, they start flourishing. Age wouldn't be a factor for them to stop being fruitful. He says that they will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.

Are you planted in the house of the Lord? No, it doesn't mean attending church, but being firmly rooted in the Word of God. If you are, your growth and fruitfulness are guaranteed.

August 3

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. (Isaiah 41:13)

Though spoken by the Lord to Israel as a nation, think of it today as the Lord speaking to

you. The Lord has taken hold of your right hand to strengthen you and he promises to help you.

In the same chapter we read the Lord saying the following,
So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

In Psalm 18, the psalmist tells the Lord,
You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. (Psalm 18:35)

The saving, sustaining, strengthening, helping right hand of the Lord has been stretched forth towards you and he will bring about a change in the adverse circumstances that you are facing today. Trust in your Savior Jesus.

Confess with your mouth this day what David said,
I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. (Psalm 16:8)

In the days to come you will be able to acknowledge the Lord's power upon your life saying,
Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. (Psalm 20:6)

and also join with the psalmist in praising your Savior saying,
Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. (Psalm 48:10)

August 4

I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. (Luke 4:25, 26)

If you are reading this, the same applies to you. Remember you have been chosen by God to be a part of his kingdom here on earth and in eternity. The Apostle Paul says,
"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (Romans 8:29, 30)

The Lord Jesus Christ has a plan and purpose for your life. Predestined, called, justified, glorified is the main plan, but while you live on earth, he has a specific plan for you like he had for Abraham and Sarah.

When you sit at his feet, he will reveal his plan for your life. Nothing haphazard, he will tell you things specifically. Because you have been chosen by him, he will arrange situations and circumstances to bring about the plans that he has for your life.

Though Joseph set out to obey his father and enquire about the well-being of his brothers, he landed in Egypt without friends or family, but God had planned things beforehand. God

knew that his brothers would throw him in the pit and plan to kill him, so he sent the Ishmaelites at the right time and made them change their mind by speaking through Judah, so they sold him to the Ishmaelites instead of killing him.

Before Joseph reached Egypt, God had already chosen the house where Joseph would stay for the next 11 years.

Live close to God and you will see his plans for you taking shape and being fulfilled. Never forget that you are chosen by God.

August 5

He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. (Deuteronomy 10:21)

Remember the past, how the Lord did great and awesome miracles for you? He is the same unchanging God and He will do it for you again. He is your praise and He never changes. Trust in Him to do the impossible for you and you will see His mighty power being released into your life once more.

So lift up your hands and praise the Lord.

The Israelites often wondered whether the Lord would do yet another miracle when they faced yet another impossible situation. And the Lord never failed them. Whether it was the red sea or Marah or lack of food or water, the Lord provided them what they needed at the right time. Not only that, He crushed their enemies who were more powerful than them.

Your loving Savior has a proven record of being faithful, so cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.

This is what Joshua told the Israelites:

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

You have assurance from the Word today that your Savior will do the same for you.

Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full. Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD. (Psalm 31:23, 24)

August 6

The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)

Have you heard God's voice lately? He's always speaking to us in one way or the other. The problem is that we are not receptive many a times.

Think of switching on the radio and selecting shortwave band. There are 100's of stations broadcasting and sometimes we have to really strain to listen to what we want. But when we really want to listen, we would do all sorts of things like putting the antenna in different positions, standing near the window with the transistor and so on and so forth. God's voice gets crowded out with all the other voices that we are eagerly receiving into us. Not that his voice is feeble or not clear; the broadcast is perfect, but the reception and the receptiveness is poor.

In the book of Revelation we read the phrase "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" written 7 times. It's not that only few people in these churches had ears; God here is speaking of receptiveness to his message.

The Psalmist sings,

Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel was among those who called on his name; they called on the LORD and he answered them. He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them. (Psalm 99:6, 7)

If we have the attitude that Samuel the prophet had, we surely will hear God's voice every day. In 1 Samuel Ch. 3 we read of Samuel telling the Lord, ".....Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)

Can we tell that to our Savior everyday? If we can, then he will speak to us and we can have great fellowship with him. Try it, if you have not yet done it; it's a very fulfilling experience.

August 7

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. (1 Samuel 17:46)

Saying the words that we read above required a lot of courage and faith and David finally did what he said. Interestingly, David started off by saying, "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand....." and not "This day I will smite thee..." because he knew that without the Lord intervening he wouldn't be able to do anything. Here was a giant who had created terror among the Israelites for 40 days and to say the words above either would make people think that he was crazy or he had some magical powers.

Even when Goliath looked David over he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

Must have been in the movies, the fella; and here he was challenging a giant.

No wonder then that Saul commented:

"Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." (1 Samuel 17:33)"

They all called him a youth, but this fellow had guts, so as to say, and did not back out. And the rest as they say is "history"

Paul the apostle, writing to Timothy said,

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

Has God called you to minister for him? Forget about them who look down on you because you are young. As Paul says,

"Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity"

Remember, many called David a youth and a youth he was when he confronted Goliath, but the Lord did great things through him. Trust in the Lord. He will do great things through you too. But remember to give him all the glory.

August 8

"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. (1 Chronicles 28:9)"

There's something very important in these words that David tells his son Solomon. In all that we do or propose to do for the Lord, the one thing that the Lord closely scrutinizes is "what is the motive behind all this?"

Is it to gain fame & personal glory?
Is it to make ourselves rich materially?
Is it to build our own kingdom?

Sadly, many set out to live a holy life at the outset but their aim gets distorted after sometime. The Lord Jesus Christ pointed out 3 things/thorns that destroys our spiritual life. In the parable of the "sower & the seed" we read Jesus telling his disciples;

"The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature." (Luke 8: 14)

Solomon began well but he went astray and did many things that angered the Lord and finally he lost much. We may have great zeal in our hearts regarding the Lord's work and we must work hard towards that end, but we must check ourselves frequently to see whether our aim really sticks onto bringing glory to the Lord and building his kingdom here on earth.

David's advice to Solomon here is good for us too.
We must all remember to "serve God with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind."
Hope we can do that.

August 9

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. (Acts 13:2-4)

Notice the words: "sent on their way by the Holy Spirit!"

If we seek the Lord earnestly, He will guide us by the Holy Spirit to whichever ministry He wants to us to do.
Ministries vary and God knows what is best suited for us and where we have to serve Him and till what time.

In the New Testament we read of the great ministries that Paul & Peter had. They are so

prominent. But some of the other disciples do not have so much of prominence. In fact, a couple of them have just their names mentioned not more than a few times. Yet the fact remains that God looks for faithfulness in whatever ministry he chooses to put us in and the rewards will be based on faithfulness.

Paul writes to the church at Philippi regarding the faithfulness of Epaphroditus; But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me. (Philippians 2:25, 29, 30)

Sometimes God chooses to change the ministry that He has put us in initially. A teacher may be called to be a pastor or a pastor may be called to prophetic ministry at a time when God desires.

We have to be alert to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He is our counselor and guide. As he sent Barnabbas and Saul for the work which he had called them to, he will guide us too and get His work done through us.

August 10

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10)

There comes circumstances or situations in our Christian life where others are calling the shots, that means we are not in control and we cannot command others to do as we say. We may be indebted to them in some way or the other or be dependant upon them, so perhaps can't argue regarding anything that we think is injustice to us.

In such situations, always remember to be still and let God do the talking. He will argue your case.

The Bible says,

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)"

The Lord knows your difficulties and He will open up ways for you; ways which you may have never imagined about.

This is how God dealt with Isaac's enemies. Earlier they had sent him away from their land. But now....

Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?" They answered, "We saw clearly that the LORD was with you; so we said, 'There ought to be a sworn agreement between us' - between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the LORD." (*Genesis 26:26-29*)

He is a just God. He will never let you down.

Praise Him for He is about to do great things for you. He is El Shaddai- God Almighty.

He says,

"I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? (Jeremiah 32:27)"

Be still and know that He is God.

August 11

But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. (Jonah 4:1)

Did you get angry at God recently? Well, it's not an uncommon phenomenon.

Here we have the little prophet getting angry after preaching a sermon which led 1,20,000 to repentance.

Jonah's problem was different, but many of us get angry at God when we abide by the rules of the book and still land up in situations where we don't see an instant deliverance. Of course we wouldn't confess it publicly but the little secret is true.

The prophet here had occasion to celebrate, but on the contrary, he's sulking. He tells God, "O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah 4:2, 3)

But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" (Jonah 4:4)

In our desperations we often ask God angrily,
"So what are you after?"
"Am I not living by your Word, what else do you want?"

These are the milder things. The vocabulary often gets worse.

But God understands our desperations. He knows our weaknesses. He has compassion on us. He still loves us because He is our Father and we are His children. He waits for us to calm down. He waits for us to change and He waits for a whole lot of things in our life. He saves, heals, delivers and comforts, but in His own time. He is Almighty God. He loves you even though you are imperfect.

August 12

Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." (Genesis 21:3, 6)

Finally a time for the Abraham family to rejoice. To have a hearty laugh.

If, Abraham when 99 and Sarah 89 were asked when they had really enjoyed laughing and rejoicing from the depths of their hearts, they would have said, "If only God's promise had materialized, we could."

The one thing they desired was the one thing that was withheld and it caused a lot of heartbreak, anxiety & tensions.

Now with the evidence of the promise in their hands, they laughed and even named their son Isaac which means "he laughs".

Sarah even imagines people talking and laughing;
"Oh, Sarah, she's finally a mom."

"Sarah & Abraham, they finally did it."
"Wonder what took them so long."

When the promise takes a long time to materialize, the joy it brings when it materializes finally is something just out of the world.

Have you been waiting for God's promise to materialize? Do you feel God is doing nothing about what he promised you?

Even when you don't see any signs of the promise being fulfilled, remember, God is at work.

Jesus said,

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." (John 5:17)"

You are going to laugh like Sarah & Abraham when the promise is fulfilled.

August 13

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 nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. (Exodus 13:21, 22)

These verses demonstrate the faithfulness of God in that the Lord never left them even for a moment during all the wilderness years of his people. Anyone looking up and ahead could know for sure that God was with him/her.

The change of the nature of His presence with them must have been so spectacular initially (cloud changing to fire), but as is oft happens, they must have considered it routine later on. An "It's always been there" attitude must have eventually crept in. So it must be in some of our own lives now.

Do we take the presence of God in our lives for granted and consider it routine and without importance?

We must not. We must always remember what the prophet Jeremiah wrote;

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23)

"The compassions of God never fail; they are new every morning."

Yes, His compassions are new every morning.

He has compassion on you everytime you call out to Him (your father in heaven). He is still the same & unchanging God who is faithful forever.

The Israelites saw the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire and still they did not trust in Him often.

Jesus said,

".....blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)"

Day or night, He's always there, whether you feel it or not. So believe.

August 14

He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. (Psalm 107:29)

Imagine God the father putting his finger to His lips and saying "Hush" to a storm that is raging.

That's what He's going to do about the storms that are lashing at your life.

Do you believe that?

Perhaps you are at your wit's end with all the problems that have befallen you.

They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. (Psalm 107:27)

Here's something that happened sometime back:

One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. (Luke 8:22-24)

Nothing seems to be working right for you?

You've been crying out to the Lord for deliverance but haven't seen much/any!!!

Well, don't stop crying out because He's going to still the storms in your life to a whisper.

You are going to say what the disciples said when Jesus calmed the storm in front of their eyes. This is what they said,

"Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4:41)

August 15

Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said: "We are yours, O David! We are with you, O son of Jesse! Success, success to you, and success to those who help you, for your God will help you." So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands. (1 Chronicles 12:18)

Loneliness can kill sometimes and David experienced that in his life after fleeing from Saul. Yet God arranged for brave men to team up with him and fight his enemies.

Sometimes in our Christian walk, we may encounter loneliness. Perhaps even when we have all our relations nearby, we may feel lonely because there is no one to say a kind word to us.

The Apostle Paul yearned for Christian friends; he wrote to Timothy:

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. (2 Timothy 4:9-11)

David was suspicious of the fellows wanting to join him too, because one of them could tell Saul of his whereabouts. In such circumstances David trusted in the Lord.

To some he said,

"If you have come to me in peace, to help me, I am ready to have you unite with me. But if you have come to betray me to my enemies when my hands are free from violence, may the God of our fathers see it and judge you." (1 Chronicles 12:17)

The words of Amasai must have strengthened David a lot.

Amasai said,

"We are yours, O David! We are with you, O son of Jesse! Success, success to you, and success to those who help you, for your God will help you."

If you are feeling lonely today, I pray that the Lord gives you Christian friends who speak kindly to you and strengthen you with their words and actions.

August 16

With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies. (Psalm 60:12) (Psalm 108:13)

Under attack from the enemy again? Fear not, with God you will gain the victory! The Bible says,

"The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies. (Isaiah 42:13)"

Your enemy, Satan will not gain victory over you.

We may encounter wicked men and women in our lives. Even the apostle Paul faced such situations. And this is what he wrote to the Thessalonians.

And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (2

Thessalonians 3:2, 3)

Yes, the Lord who has called you is faithful; he will not leave you nor forsake you. He will strengthen you by his mighty arms.

The power behind evil people is Satan and we can gain victory over his evil powers by standing firm in the Word, by praying with faith and trusting in the Lord.

The Bible says,

"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty. (Deuteronomy 33:26)

To you he says,

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!' (Deuteronomy 33:27)".

You can confidently say what the Psalmist said,

The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. (Psalm 118:7)

August 17

I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor." (John 4:38)

Some ministries grow rapidly while with others the growth is slow. Those whose ministries grow fast may think that it is because of their abilities or as some say, a greater anointing that is bringing them results. Anointing, methods and abilities are all important, but we must understand that many others have already labored for the souls that we have finally won for Christ.

It's like several people taking turns to cut down a big tree. The man whose final stroke of the axe brings the tree down cannot say that he was the only one who did the job, because there were several before him who also put in their efforts.

Sometimes it may take years for a person to accept Jesus as Savior. God may have dropped the seed of the gospel through several people of His into that person's life. Finally when the person comes to accept Christ, though the person who spoke last may feel that he/she has won a soul, God sees the many who have labored for it and the reward of the effort will be shared finally by all who have put in their effort.

Not only that, we may work hard to bring a person to Christ and finally he/she may join another church. It's not that we have lost something, but the words of Jesus that we read above coming true.

Sometimes we may do the hard work, but others may reap the benefits or sometimes others may do the hard work and we will reap the benefits.

August 18

I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. (Isaiah 45:3)

This is one of the many promises that God gave to Cyrus, the Persian king. Treasures of darkness and riches stored in secret places. Something unusual, isn't it?

In the olden days, kings of rival nations always hid their treasures in secret places and in darkness because if they were attacked and they fell into the hands of the enemy, their treasures would not be discovered. Only a few of the king's closest aides knew about these secret places. God was going to give Cyrus these treasures of darkness and riches stored in secret places. And He fulfilled his promise in the lifetime of Cyrus.

Sometimes God gives us things that we don't ask of Him. It's just like He's decided to give it to us because of His great love for us. Actually, we deserve nothing but the Bible says, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)"

Yes, God's love for you is great. Sometimes some of us ask ourselves: Does God really love me? Yes He does; He did not spare his own Son, just for you.

Paul the apostle desired that the Ephesians knew the greatness of God's love. So he wrote, "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, (Ephesians 3:17,18)

God's love is infinite and yes! He loves you much more than you can ever imagine.

August 19

"If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has

passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me! (Job 14:13)"

Job knew what suffering was and in the depths of his misery and frustration, he cries to God and puts across the request that we read in the verse above.

"Hide me in the grave & conceal me till your anger has passed."

It's like Job is requesting an underground bunker where he can rest without the wrath of the Almighty coming near him.

Job wanted to die and forget his misery; that prayer was not answered, so now he prays for God to hide him alive till His wrath has passed.

He also prays to God to not just go on indefinitely, but to set a time.

How often we are troubled by problems that just do not go away how much ever we pray or plead. Some believers pray that death would be better than undergoing all this misery. But we must always remember a verse in the book of James. It will strengthen us and give us hope.

"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. (James 5:11)"

Jesus who is compassionate and merciful will change the awful circumstances that you are facing these days and bless you like He blessed Job finally. So persevere. He will give you a sign of his goodness when you pray to him as the Psalmist did:

Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me. (Psalm 86:17)

August 20

I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful. (Jeremiah 31:4)

Feeling shattered by the heavy burdens upon you?

Depressed? Because nothing that you put your hand to seems to work?

Find solace this day from this verse that the Lord speaks to you.

Spiritually, morally and in all ways Israel was often in shambles because of moving away from the living God. But God had loved them with an everlasting love.

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3)

Yes, God loves you with an everlasting love. That doesn't mean He approves the wrong in your life. He is gentle and long-suffering waiting for you to have close fellowship with Him at all times.

Regarding Israel, God said:

Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. (Jeremiah 33:6)

"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. (Hosea 14:4)

He wants to build you and not destroy you; He wants to give you a hope and a future. So seek Him with all your heart and He will give you the peace that passes all understanding.

Remember,

"The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5: 10)"

August 21

I will listen to what God the Lord will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints - but let them not return to folly. (Psalm 85:12)

So what is the Lord promising? Peace, of course! And for whom- for his saints. Well, we may not have the St. before our names, but that is how God sees us and that is how God wants us to be.

But look at the last part of the verse. It says, "let not the saints return to folly." Saints and folly do not go together. It sounds so un-saintly.

Yet, that's the truth. The Apostle Paul, in some of his letters to different churches begins by addressing the believers in those churches as saints and then goes on to pen their present follies. And the list of follies is quite long.

This is what Paul wrote to the holy and faithful brethren in Colosse:

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:5-10)

The last part explains it all. It's all about renewal. Being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

So let us not return to folly, but submit ourselves to God and experience the peace that comes from that submission.

August 22

My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." (Daniel 6:22)

Daniel says he was found "innocent in God's sight."

I wonder how many of us can say that. Can you? Can I? If we can, then certainly the Lord will not let the lions that we are facing now hurt us.

Speaking about Satan, the Apostle Peter writes;

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

The Apostle Paul says,

"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message

might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. (2 Timothy 4:17)"

The lion here was Nero who cunningly opposed Paul; In your case it may be someone you know through whom the devil is trying to destroy your life.

Remember what Daniel said, "The lions have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight."

Solomon, the king of Israel prayed for God to let the innocent go free:

Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive. "When a man wrongs his neighbor and is required to take an oath and he comes and swears the oath before your altar in this temple, then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty and bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declare the innocent not guilty, and so establish his innocence. (1 Kings 8:30-32)

Your innocence in God's presence will be what delivers you. So, see to it that you are found innocent in His presence.

August 23

You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. (Psalm 5:4)

Sometimes circumstances in our life may force us to think that God is on the side of our enemies, that he is supporting evildoers. But here is what David realized in his walk with God- that God does not take pleasure in evil and the wicked cannot dwell with him.

Regarding the wicked, the Bible has much to say and most of it is condemnation:

The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming. (Psalm 37:12, 13)

But the wicked will perish: The LORD's enemies will be like the beauty of the fields, they will vanish - vanish like smoke. (Psalm 37:20)

In the hand of the LORD is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs. (Psalm 75:8)

The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. (Psalm 145:20)

The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. (Psalm 146:9)

The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground. (Psalm 147:6)

The prophet Habakkuk was surprised that God was punishing Israel by sending an even more wicked nation- the Babylonians to persecute Israel. He could not understand God's intention about this. Sure, Judah deserved to be punished, but why the wicked Babylonians? was his question. God answered him in His own way telling him that He would deal with the Babylonians in His own time. The prophet ends his book by declaring that even if everything seems hopeless, he will never stop trusting God.

Well, there's a lesson for all of us here. We need to "hope against hope" as Abraham did

and wait for God's deliverance. And come it will, sooner or later. There's no doubt about that.

August 24

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore. (Psalm 125:2)

We must always remember that the Lord is our protection. Men can arrange the best of protection for themselves, but it's no use when the earth below shakes. The spot of ground that you are secure on, is the spot of ground covered by the blood of Jesus.

The Bible says,

"If you make the Most High your dwelling - even the LORD, who is my refuge then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. (Psalm 91:9, 10)

If the Lord says that, it is true and it will stand you good stead in the time of trouble. Have no fear if you are residing in a quake hit area or an area prone to earthquakes. Hold on to the promise given above. God will fulfill it, in time of need.

God is faithful and he will not let you or your family down.

The Psalmist sang,

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. (Psalm 32:7)

Remember, God is like a huge mountain covering you and your family from all sides. You are secure.

You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing. (Job 5:24)

You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. (Job 11:18)

August 25

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people. (Psalm 113:7,8)

Feeling "down in the dumps?" There's hope for you because this verse says so. Putting in a lot of effort but failing? There's hope for you because the Lord Jesus has not abandoned you. He's planning new things for you. Are you willing to take up the plans he has jotted out for you and start afresh?

The Bible says,

"He does not take his eyes off the righteous; he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever. (Job 36:7)"

No, he has not forgotten you. He says,

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! (Isaiah 49:15)"

Well, that should give you fresh hope.

If you are still not convinced, read this:

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)"

The purists may say that this promise was for a nation. I say, today it's for you. Will you accept it?

One more thing: Don't fear the enemy! Who says so??

The Lord says,

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

August 26

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

Easy to say, "I told you this will happen, if you are not careful." several times to a believer friend or brother/sister in Christ who is at fault and then give him/her a dose of our wisdom several times. Well, it will all come back to us some day if we are not careful.

God is no respecter of persons and if we are merciful to others, God will show us mercy in our time of need.

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'" (Luke 10:30-35)

The Good Samaritan showed mercy and did not chide the fellow who was left half dead by robbers.

The question is whether we can bridle our tongue when we know that someone is in the wrong and needs encouragement and kind words.

Of course we can always behave like the priest & the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:30-37)

We may have theology on our insides, but the Lord is searching for mercy in our hearts. Easy to judge, difficult to show mercy? We must search our hearts again. And may the Holy Spirit help us in that.

August 27

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (Romans 4:13)

One of the things the disciples got to hear often from Jesus was "O, ye of little faith" I don't know about you, but I wonder how many times he must have told me that in the past 26 years that I have known him. And the majority of them must have been after I became a minister of the gospel.

The disciples were eyewitnesses of most of the miracles, yet wouldn't or couldn't believe. Philip, after being with Jesus after more than a year was asked a simple question.

"When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" (John 6:5-7)

Philip's calculation was good, but not exactly what Jesus expected. And Jesus taught him new things.

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. (John 6:8-13)

Even if he calls us "O, ye of little faith" He loves us, and with every miracle that He does for us, He expects us to grow in our faith in Him.

Abraham had issues with faith too, but he matured in his faith and God honored his faith. And God will honor our faith in him too. That's what the Apostle Paul writes here. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

August 28

It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" (Romans 14:11)

In the book of Philippians we read, Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

Every knee that has not bowed to the name of Jesus and every tongue that has not confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord will one day do that. But when?? There are so many who die without doing this, but the day is not far when they will be doing it.

In Revelation Ch. 20 we read, Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to

what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20: 11-15)

Yes, those who have not bowed their knees to the name of Jesus and every tongue that has not confessed that Jesus is Lord (while they lived) will do it just before they are thrown into the lake of fire. That will be the fulfillment of Apostle Paul's words.

As the Psalmist says,
God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him. (Psalm 67:7)
Praise the Lord.

Blessed are you if you have confessed "Jesus is Lord" and accepted His atoning work on the cross.

August 29

**I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me.
(Psalm 41:11)**

The enemy tries to play on our thought processes and he often succeeds in bringing depression and anxiety in our lives. Sometimes nothing that we do seems to work. We pray faithfully, praise & thank God, worship, read the Word, fast, do good to others, etc. etc. yet we encounter delays in our prayers being answered. And then comes frustration which makes us think that all that we do is no good.

Have you experienced or are experiencing such a situation?

It's not going to last for a long time dear Brother, dear Sister. It's just a limited period of time during which we must continue to live faithfully to God and we will surely see His deliverance.

Frustrations come to all of us. It's just a part of life. More important is what we do with these frustrations! We can overcome them by prayer and waiting upon the Lord or we can go in to sin and then blame the frustrations for sinning.

Of course, the Lord understands our frustrating situations. He had gone through it several times when He was doing ministry for 3 1/2 years.

Even the Apostle Paul experienced it. He wrote thus;
At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. (2 Timothy 4:16,17)

Remember, the Lord is with you and will give you the required strength to overcome what you are experiencing today. So cheer up; Jesus loves you.

August 30

About Naphtali he said: "Naphtali is abounding with the favor of the Lord and is full of his blessing; he will inherit southward to the lake." (Deuteronomy 33:23)

Naphtali was the 5th son of Jacob, and the 2nd born to him by Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah. At his birth Rachel is said to have exclaimed, naphtule 'Elohim niphtalti, "wrestlings of God"--i.e. "mighty wrestlings"--"have I wrestled." ("I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.")

Since her sister was fruitful and giving birth to many children and because she herself was barren, the children her maid Bilhah bore were a source of consolation to her. Naming him thus, indicated that she had won the favor and blessing of God.

Rachel had to wait a long time to conceive a child by herself, but God had mercy on her and opened her womb and from her were born 2 sons to Jacob- Joseph & Benjamin. Earlier she and Jacob had an argument when she was barren.

When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!" Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?" (Genesis 30:1, 2)

An argument because of the frustrations in her life because of being barren.

But God had compassion on her and fulfilled her desire in his time.

Our God is a prayer answering God. He answers our prayers and that's why the psalmist says,

"Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me! (Psalm 66:20)"

Be strengthened this day. Whatever be your request, He will answer your prayer too.

August 31

The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow's heart sing. (Job 29:13)

This is what Job said in one of his discourses. A dying man blessing him and a widow's heart singing. Why? Only because Job was a generous and kind man. He cared for the poor and for the orphans and widows.

The Apostle James says,

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27)"

This then should be a part of our Christian life. The poor, the orphans and the widows; they need more love and care than those who are better off and in families.

Job said,

"I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. (Job 29:14- 16)

Even in the Old Testament, some of the laws given to the Israelites were to help the poor

and needy:

When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. (Deuteronomy 24: 19-21)

Love & Compassion, 2 great virtues that Jesus himself had in abundance. He expects us also to follow in the same vein. He said,
"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5: 14-16)

May the Lord help each one of us to live as the Lord desires.

September 1

**Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed!
(Jeremiah 20:14)**

Jeremiah is lamenting because of the great number of problems and persecution he is facing as a prophet of God. Some of us, when we experience distressing problems in our lives lament like Jeremiah: it was better if I was not born.

It's not surprising that Jeremiah is lamenting thus because he faced a lot of rejection. Read what he says,

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

Quite natural, I would say, his complaining. There are wives who have tried to reason with their husbands and parents who have tried to persuade their children to follow godly ways but failed.

But our God is a just God. He will not let you down. He says,
"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54: 10)"

He also says,

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

So be strengthened this day. The Lord loves you with an everlasting love.

September 2

Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the poor and needy praise your

name. (Psalm 74:21)

A cry from the heart of the psalmist. The world is one of the rich and mighty and justice often evades the poor. They are oppressed and suffer. Disgrace is often their food. Yet when the Almighty rises to fight for the oppressed believer, the Pharaohs of the world sink in the Red Seas.

All through the psalms, we read of cries for God to rise up and fight for the oppressed...You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? (Psalm 43:2)

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. (Psalm 82:3)

...and also the declarations that he is the helper of the oppressed.

The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. (Psalm 9:9)

The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (Psalm 103:6)

Jesus himself said this about those who are his:

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7, 8)

Of course, faith is what he always seeks in our lives as believer's. The Bible says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Jesus will not let you down. Cry out to him in your oppression. He will set you free. He will not let the enemy make you retreat in disgrace. Instead he will deliver you and you will praise him all the more.

September 3

With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love to Israel endures forever." And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. (Ezra 3:11)

After 70 years of Babylonian exile, the Israelites were back in their land, but without a temple, for the earlier temple had been destroyed and Jerusalem burnt with fire by King Nebuchadnezzar during his 3 invasions of the land.

The elders who had witnessed the glory of the former temple built by Solomon wept and the younger generation rejoiced that the new temple foundation was being laid.

When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. (Ezra 3:10)

They were starting the new project by praising God, trusting that he would help them complete.

Who would have ever thought that the wonderful temple built by Solomon would be laid waste? It had taken 7 years to build and it was a magnificent monument. Nothing could match its grandeur in that era. But King Solomon married foreign women who

worshipped idols and he was no longer faithful to God who had given him everything from knowledge and wisdom to riches and fame. Of the kings that followed Solomon's reign, only a few were faithful to the Lord.

Sin had led to punishment- an exile and now they were being restored by God himself. Joy and sorrow were both witnessed at this solemn occasion.

Many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away. (Ezra 3:12, 13)

They praised God vociferously hoping and trusting that what they were starting would be brought into completion by God. And God was faithful. He did not leave them nor forsake them. The temple was built.

September 4

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:14-16)

The word "unique" has somewhat lost it's meaning with cloning coming to the fore. Man has embarked on a strange path to defy the uniqueness of God's creation. How long it's glory will last remains to be seen. Perhaps it would end in the way "the tower of Babel" did. But God does allow man to continue in his discoveries and inventions for reasons known only to him. If he wants, he can stop anything anywhere anytime. Yet he chooses to be silent for a while.

King David, the great psalmist of Israel praised God for having created him so wonderfully. The human body is a marvel, unmatched by all the technological accomplishments of mankind. Each organ is a wonderful creation in itself, unique in it's design, texture, function and frailty. Some organs are more important than the others. Some can be lived without. Some are indispensable. Almost all need the others to function. Some produce the toxins that only others are able to wash away.

David realizes the wonder working creation power of God and thus declares "your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body."

9 months (some less & some more) for a woman to be pregnant full term and all the while a new life is taking shape inside of her, frame by frame, organ by organ, coming to full maturity.

David acknowledges that everything about him was known by God even before he had lived 1 day. "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. "

God in his creating power is unmatched and we must spend time in praising him for having created us for himself.

Yes, God knows everything about you and me. Neither the beginning nor the end of our lives is hidden from him. He is truly awesome. He deserves all the praise. May all glory be to him.

September 5

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

The Apostle Peter sums up why God transformed 'some' according to his liking to become a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation & a people belonging to God- To declare the praises of the one who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Is praising God justified? Yes it is. John the Apostle tells us why. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father - to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. (Revelation 1:5, 6)

Because of his great love for us, he freed us from our sins by shedding his blood on the cross. And why did he do it? To make us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father.

The love that Jesus showed has no comparisons except what the Father also did. About the love of Jesus the Bible says,

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

And about the love of the Father the Bible says,

"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)

We who were once "not a people" have now become "the people of God". And having become "the people of God", our aim in life should be to sing the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Praise be to the Lord now and forever.

September 6

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

Can we accept each other as our brothers and sisters in Christ? There may be differences in our doctrines even when they may seem sound to each of us (not talking about false doctrines--which we all must abhor) and differences in the way of worship and lots of other differences, but we should be able to accept one another because we all have the same

factor that will give us eternal life- Jesus.

The New Testament is- believing in what Jesus did by offering himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins and the resulting eternal life with him if we live for him after accepting him as Savior.

Perhaps you may never have spoken in tongues or do not believe that that gift exists or any other gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 exists; still you should accept others who do believe in and exercise these gifts.

You may be a pre-tribulationist and you are sure that that is the right doctrine; still you should accept others who are post-tribulationists or mid-tribulationists for that matter because Jesus does not despise them because they believe so.

You may believe that your church or denomination has the perfect worship; still you should accept others from other denominations or churches despite their imperfections because Jesus still loves them.

You may have faith to move mountains; still you should not look down upon some other believer who cannot exercise as much faith as you.

Christ has accepted us with all our imperfections and he has given us the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to cleanse ourselves. We all are imperfect in one way or the other and so we should be able to accept one another as Christ accepted us. That will bring praise to God.

September 7

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

Lot's of exhortations in this psalm. The final one being, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

Many things to be noticed here in this psalm and all about praise.

1. Praise God in....verse 1...Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. (Psalm 150:1)

2. Praise God for....verse 2...Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. (Psalm 150:2)

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

The "Praise God with.." part is the largest in this series. The psalmist is considering maximizing his praise and worship with the use of all kinds of musical instruments and with dancing. He intends to be loud with his praise and worship and also is exhorting others to do the same.

"Praise him with resounding cymbals" he says.

Worship is something personal to each of us. Some like to quietly worship the Lord while others like to make much noise. The psalmist here seems to be in the second category. He likes to enjoy his worship by making it lively with the use of many instruments and also by dancing to the tune. He seems to be delighting in the Lord.

Do you delight in the Lord while you praise and worship him? Try it; it can bring you a joy that you may have never experienced.

September 8

**I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.
(Psalm 18:3)**

Is the Lord worthy of praise? Yes, he is! The psalmists definitely thought so. That's why they sang,

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.
(Psalm 48:1)

For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. (Psalm 96:4)

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. (Psalm 145:3)

They affirmed that God was not only worthy, but most worthy.

The writer of Hebrews says, Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. (Hebrews 3:3)

Why? Because "He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. (Hebrews 3:2) Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. (Hebrews 3:5, 6a)

And then this beautiful part in the book of Revelation;

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. (Revelation 5:2,4,6,7)

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:9,12)

He truly is worthy of praise, your praise. Yes; your praise will bring him glory. So do not keep silent.

September 9

And Hiram added: "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth! He has given King David a wise son, endowed with intelligence and discernment, who will build a temple for the LORD and a palace for himself. (2 Chronicles 2:12)

Hiram, king of Tyre had earlier built a palace for King David. When he heard that Solomon had been anointed king to succeed his father David, he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David. When Solomon set out to build a temple for the Lord, he asked for help from Hiram.

When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the LORD today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation." So Hiram sent word to Solomon: "I have received the message you sent me and will do all you want in providing the cedar and pine logs. My men will haul them down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you specify. There I will separate them and you can take them away. And you are to grant my wish by providing food for my royal household." (1 Kings 5:7-9)

In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and pine logs he wanted, and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year.

Hiram took great interest in this project that Solomon had undertaken and on Solomon's request sent him Hiram-Abi, a man who was highly skilled and experienced in all kinds of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood work. He worked with the craftsmen of Solomon and was a great help in building the temple.

In the title verse, we read of how Hiram praised the Lord of Israel, though he was a gentile king. The awesome power with which the God of Israel had delivered his children time and again was well known among the nations and Hiram did not hide his admiration for the God of Israel. He acknowledges that the God of Israel is the maker of heaven and earth. He praised God for giving David a wise son and for having endowed him with intelligence and discernment.

The praises of our God, the great "I am" flows out from all corners of the earth from the mouths of people of all nations, literate and illiterate and it will continue forever and ever. Let's continue to praise him all the more as we see our redemption drawing near.

September 10

David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. (1 Chronicles 29:10-13)

One of the great assets in the life of David was his zeal to praise the Lord and glorify him whenever the opportunity arose. Not that one needs an opportunity to praise God. He is

worthy to be praised at all times and in all seasons. Not climatic seasons, but seasons of joy, seasons of grief, some good seasons when praise comes spontaneously while some bad seasons when we may not even feel like praising him because of adverse circumstances in our life.

One of the phrases we read here is "everlasting to everlasting" i.e. David acknowledges the eternal nature of God. In the few verses of praise above David acknowledges his God to be omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Yes, our Lord is all in all, yet he loves his creation and has mercy and compassion on them. David also acknowledges God as the great giver here..the giver of wealth, honor, strength and exaltation.

David was never ashamed to glorify God publicly. In fact his zeal for worshipping and glorifying God brought some adverse comments from his own wife. All to her loss, because she remained childless all her life. We read in the 2nd book of Samuel;
"David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets. As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart. (2 Samuel 6:14-16)

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel - I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor." And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death. (2 Samuel 6:20-23)

Notable here is David's decision despite the insult: "I will celebrate before the LORD."

Some people may make a hue and cry when you set out to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Most of the objections come from close family and friends. Let your decision be firm and always be bold enough to say like David said, "I will celebrate before the LORD."

September 11

When David was old and full of years, he made his son Solomon king over Israel. He also gathered together all the leaders of Israel, as well as the priests and Levites. The Levites thirty years old or more were counted and the total number of men was thirty-eight thousand. David said, "Of these, twenty-four thousand are to supervise the work of the temple of the Lord and six thousand are to be officials and judges. Four thousand are to be gatekeepers and four thousand are to praise the Lord with the musical instruments I have provided for that purpose." (1 Chronicles 23:1-5)

Towards the end of the above passage we read that David set apart 4000 Levites for worship. They were supposed to praise the Lord with musical instruments that David had provided for this purpose.

That must have been a sizable crowd at every worship session not counting the

commoners.

Worship has great importance in God's presence if offered with a pure heart. The psalmist sang: " Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. (Psalm 33:1)Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. (Psalm 33:2)Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. (Psalm 33:3)

3 exhortations are given in the above verses: 1) If we worship God, it must be with a pure heart.2) Let the worship be accompanied with musical instruments.3) Let the worship be fresh and strong.

It doesn't mean that worship without instruments is not pleasing to the Lord. Neither does it mean that singing old songs make the worship dull. It's all a matter of the heart. God looks at our hearts while we lift his name with praises. If our hearts are pure, our worship is acceptable. If we are not right with God or we live in disobedience to his Word, the worship becomes meaningless.

Yet, it is remarkable that David should set apart 4000 Levites for this purpose. God inhabits the praises of his people, so shouldn't we praise him all the more? Yes, we should.

September 12

Then he said: "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. (1 Kings 8:15)

The project that Solomon set out to complete i.e. building a temple for the Lord, was a mammoth one and in the process he realized that it was not his hands that had worked out the whole thing but the hand of God. Thus he praised the Lord for the same and also proclaimed that God had fulfilled his promise to his father, David.

Sometimes people think it is their education or skill or talent that has made them what they are; as some say, "He's a self made man" meaning, "worked it out all on his own." Yet, we must never forget that it's all the grace of God that has made us what we are.

God reminded the Israelites of this before they entered Canaan. He said, "You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. (Deuteronomy 8:17, 18)

God also advised them saying, "Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. (Deuteronomy 8:11-16)

Never forget the beginnings dear friend. Always give the glory to God for all things achieved, for without him, we are nothing. Always be bold and humble enough to say, "It's all the grace of God."

September 13

**And the king bowed in worship on his bed and said, `Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today."
(1 Kings 1:48)**

David here praises the Lord when Solomon, his son from Bathsheba is enthroned as King of Israel. David was old and one of his other son's Adonijah desired to be the next king. So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. He conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David's special guard did not join Adonijah. Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Stone of Zohelath near En Rogel. He invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah who were royal officials, but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon.

Then Nathan the prophet asked Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king without our Lord David's knowing it? Now then, let me advise you how you can save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. Go in to King David and say to him, `My Lord the king, did you not swear to me your servant: "Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' While you are still there talking to the king, I will come in and confirm what you have said."(1 Kings 1:11-14)

So Bathsheba went to see the aged king and reminded him of his oath to her and while she was speaking, Nathan, the prophet gave his confirmation of the same. The king then took an oath: "As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, I will surely carry out today what I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place." King David called Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada and said to them: "Take your Lord's servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, `Long live King Solomon!' Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah."

Adonijah feared for his life when this happened and he caught hold of the horns of the altar to escape death. Solomon had him brought down from the altar and sent him home.

Everything was done as David desired and he was happy and praised the Lord for setting Solomon on the throne.

The Bible says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12)

How very true.

September 14

"The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior! He is

the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me, who sets me free from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name. (2 Samuel 22:47-50)

Some pure praise from a man, of whom God said, "I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do." (Acts 13:22) David already praising the Lord starting verse 47 takes a decision again; to praise him even more. Praises and more praises to the God who is taking care of every aspect of his life.

Our praises should multiply as we see the glorious work of God in our lives. He is there by our side at all times whether we feel his presence or not. When we feel his presence it's great, but when we don't feel his presence for whatever reason, he is still there by our sides as the one and only "Immanuel".

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)" All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" - which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:22, 23)

Prophesied and fulfilled.

As David says in the above verses he is indeed our Lord, God, Rock, Savior, Avenger, Subduer, Deliverer & Rescuer. And he is a lot more. So shall we give more praises? Let's praise his name for he is worthy to be praised.

September 15

I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. (2 Samuel 22:4)

David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. David had a lot of enemies beginning with Saul and continuing with characters like his own family members especially his son Absalom who wanted to usurp his authority as king and rule the land instead. But the delivering mighty arm of the Lord was always with David and though he had to go through some very difficult situations, God finally gave him victory after victory when he cried out to the Lord.

The enemy of all believers- Satan is always out to defeat us in one way or the other. Jesus said, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10) Satan is jealous of "the fullness of life" that Jesus wants to give us. That's why he brings varied temptations in our lives making us to sin and then he accuses us about the sins that we commit.

The Apostle Paul exhorts believers in the book of Ephesians, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

God will give you victory over all the satanic forces that are tormenting you and your family. Stand firm, rooted in the Word. Continually worship the Lord, pray at all times with every kind of prayer and meditate on the Word of God regularly, holding on to the promises written in it. Remember, the Lord gave David victory over all his enemies. He will do the same for you and your family too.

September 16

David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak." (1 Samuel 25:32-34)

Nabal was a stubborn character who had scant respect for David though David and the men with him were a shield to the flocks of Nabal. David had decided to take revenge because Nabal had insulted him. He said, ", "It's been useless--all my watching over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!" (1 Samuel 25:21, 22)

To the rescue came Abigail, Nabal's wife who hastened to meet David while he and his men set out to kill Nabal and all the males in his family. She fell at his feet and begged for mercy. She dealt wisely with him and said, "Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. (1 Samuel 25:26-29)

Abigail's words were like a balm for the hurts that David had sustained because of Nabal's insulting behavior. She was able to persuade David from destroying her entire family though Nabal died because of God's judgment coming upon him. David praised God for her good judgment and for keeping him from bloodshed. He blessed her for acting wisely.

We read in the book of Proverbs that, "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." (Proverbs 25:11). How true when we think of how this woman spoke to bring deliverance for her family. Praise the Lord.

September 17

The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth." (Ruth 4:14, 15)

Finally a time of rejoicing had come into the life of Naomi after all the anguish that she had endured in her life. She was a widow and had lost both her sons and the only thing that she had solace in was her daughter-in-law Ruth who had taken a decision to stay with her come what may.

Naomi had returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?" "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

Wonder whether the Lord had much to do with all the misfortune that she talked about; perhaps it was the agony that she was going through that made her say all that. Nevertheless, the Bible affirms that, "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and also that, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."(Psalm 103:8, 13)

This is vividly seen in the restoration that the Lord worked out in the life of Naomi. The coming of Boaz into Ruth's life was no chance happening but all engineered by the Lord. Naomi didn't want to marry again. She would never enjoy the love of a husband again but God gave her a child (Obed- Boaz & Ruth's child) in her arms to forget the pains that she had gone through.

God works in mysterious ways. The pain/anguish that you are passing through today can be healed by the Lord in his perfect way. So trust in him.

September 18

On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song: "When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves, praise the Lord. (Judges 5:1, 2)

The question is: "Do we offer ourselves willingly to the Lord or do we submit reluctantly?" Some believers give themselves wholly to the Lord and allow the Lord to run their lives while others though they say they have submitted their lives into the Lord's hands still run their own lives.

When we try to run our own lives without obeying the Word or taking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, things start going awry. A little allowance here and a little allowance there in regards to walking the ways of the flesh and the world ruins our relationship with the Lord.

Only each of us and the Lord Jesus knows how much of our lives is submitted to the Lord. Our thoughts, looks, words & actions often betray our proclamation that we are the Lord's.

Often we are reluctant to even do the work of the Lord giving excuses like some tribes of Israel did when they were called by Barak & Deborah to join the army to fight against the enemy.

Regarding Reuben, Dan & Asher, Deborah and Barak sang, "Why did you stay among the campfires to hear the whistling for the flocks? In the districts of Reuben there was much

searching of heart. Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan. And Dan, why did he linger by the ships? Asher remained on the coast and stayed in his coves." (Judges 5:16, 17)

But good things were sung about Issachar, Zebulun & Naphtali. "The princes of Issachar were with Deborah; yes, Issachar was with Barak, rushing after him into the valley. The people of Zebulun risked their very lives; so did Naphtali on the heights of the field." (Judges 5:15, 18)

Are we among the ones who offer themselves willingly to the Lord or are we among the ones who shrink back and take the back seat? Good if each one of us could evaluate ourselves.

September 19

I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! (Deuteronomy 32:3)

That's one of the great decisions that a person can take in his/her life. One of the meanings of the word proclaim is "to announce officially and publicly" and if that's a decision that we have taken regarding our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ it will surely bring glory to the Lord. Some may ask, "Will it do any good?" It will surely.

So when was it that you announced publicly what the Lord has done for you? Of course, some may tend to see only the bad things that have happened to them and ask, "How can I when so many adverse situations plague my life?" That's understandable and the Lord understands too, but praising him in adversity and proclaiming his name in adversity can bring great peace into our lives- the peace that passes all understanding.

David sang to the Lord in his time of adversity saying, "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. (Psalm 34:1). This he sang when he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left.

Here's a passage from the gospel of Luke of how the Lord values our praises.

"When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." (Luke 19:37-40)

If we keep quiet, as the Lord said, "the stones will cry out". So shall we proclaim the name of the Lord day in and day out, for surely he is worthy of all the praise that we can give him.

September 20

He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised. (Deuteronomy 26:19)

We read a couple of declarations in Deuteronomy 26 as the chapter ends. The Israelites made a declaration and so did the Lord Almighty. God declared that he was going to set them in praise, fame and honor because of a declaration that the Israelites made. The

Israelites had declared that the Lord was their God and that they would walk in his ways, and that they would keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that they would obey him. (Based on Deuteronomy 26:17)

They declared a lot but couldn't fulfill what they declared. Of course, the Lord was their God, but they ran after idols too. Very soon they would no longer be keeping his decrees, commands and laws. They were disobedient and that is how they landed up serving their enemies. The book of Judges is a fine example of how they suffered because of their disobedience. For long years they were afflicted by several enemy kingdoms, but when they repented and cried to the Lord, God raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of their enemies. The book of Judges ends on a sad note. It says, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit. (Judges 21:25)"

If we start living as we see fit, we walk away from God's divine protection over our lives and make ourselves easy prey for the devil. The Bible says, "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (Jude 1: 20-23)

The Holy Spirit is able to keep us from falling and present us before God's glorious presence without fault and with great joy, but for that we must be obedient to God's Word as long as we live. He will then finally set us in praise, fame and honor forever and ever.

September 21

He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. (Deuteronomy 10:21)

Moses tells the Israelites that God is their praise and reminds them of the awesome wonders of which they were eye witnesses in Egypt and in the wilderness.

The Psalmists sing about God's wondrous works in this manner:

Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare. (Psalm 40:5)

Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy. (Psalm 65:8)

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. (Psalm 78:4)

Often we tend to forget the great deliverances that the Lord has wrought in our lives. Maybe we are forgetful or the present problems cloud out the works of the Lord in our not so distant past. If we kept a diary and jot down at the end of each day all that the Lord has done for us that day, there will be much to testify at the watch night service on Dec. 31st. Of course there may not be any spectacular event every day, but being able to breathe freely and being able to enjoy the food that we eat each day are itself great things.

Ask the Asthmatic who is on oxygen in the ICU and he will tell you the value of a breath, because he is often short of it. Ask the one who suffers from Gastric Ulcer and Reflux and

he will tell you the value of a good alimentary system for he can rarely enjoy the food that he eats.

Have a bed to lie on? Thank Jesus, for there are many who sleep on the streets and outside closed shops. Have a bed and can sleep well? —that's even a greater blessing for there are many who hardly sleep because of fears.

Jesus is our praise. Let's look back often and remember the goodness, kindness and compassion that the Lord has had on us and our families.

Small or great! Many are his works in our lives. So let's praise him all the more.

September 22

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

The word Deuteronomy means "repetition of the law". Moses and the Israelites were in the territory of Moab and as his final act at this important time of transferring leadership to Joshua, Moses delivered his farewell addresses which were actually a covenant renewal to prepare the people for their entrance into Canaan. Here Moses exhorts the Israelites to praise the Lord Almighty for the good land that he has given them.

When blessings start flowing into the lives of believers, some often tend to think that it is because of their own goodness or holiness or ability or strength that they are getting these blessings. In the verses that follow the above verse, the Israelites are plainly given a warning. We read in Deuteronomy 8:12-18

"Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today."

Whatever we are today or whatever we have is all because of the Lord. The Bible says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

So shouldn't we "Through Jesus, therefore, continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-- the fruit of lips that confess his name." (Hebrews 13:15)
That would be appropriate I guess.

September 23

"When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. But in

the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19: 23-25)

This was one of the laws that were given by God to the Israelites to obey in the Old Testament. Imagine planting a fruit tree and then waiting for 5 years to eat its fruit. That would surely test our patience. The first three years the fruit was to be considered forbidden. Then in the fourth year the fruit became holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. Finally the fruit was ready to be eaten in the fifth year. A tedious process, but one that God planned for blessing them. For he said, "In this way your harvest will be increased." He would be checking their obedience.

We read in the book of Proverbs:

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9, 10)

If believers today were called to obey the laws given to Moses and the Israelites, there would be few to run the race. Thanks be to Jesus that he came and fulfilled the law for us, setting us free and giving us freedom. But should we use this freedom to sin? No, never. Instead we should be always grateful and thankful to God that he has set us apart for himself, paying a heavy price wherein his only begotten son had to cry out to his father, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me."

The Bible says, "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)

It also says, "You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:20)

May the Holy Spirit help us all to be obedient and faithful to God and his Word.

September 24

Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. He said, "Praise be to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God. (Exodus 18: 9-12)

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law or Zipporah's father praises the Almighty God for his mighty acts in saving Moses and the Israelites from Pharaoh and his army. He has come to a realization here that Moses' God is greater than all other gods. This happened because of Moses giving his testimony to Jethro. In v. 8 of the same chapter, we read, "Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them."

Our testimony can work wonders in the lives of people who are yet to know the Lord as we have known. A few words of how the Lord has taken charge of our lives after we have given ourselves to him can sow a seed of the gospel in the hearts of many.

That would be a sign of gratitude on our part for what Jesus did for us on the cross. In the Old Testament, we read of the Psalmist decision for God's awesome work in his life.

"How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. (Psalm 116:12-14)

Not all may respond positively to our witnessing but we are all called to sow the seed and God will work in his own way in his own time to work out his purposes in that person. Maybe we are the 1st or 15th or 50th person to sow the seed in a person's heart regarding the agape love of Jesus but it is all very important for God to work in that person's life. So let's not shrink back in testifying regarding the wondrous acts of God in our life and let many more praise God and accept Jesus as Savior when they realize the great works of God in our lives.

September 25

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

After witnessing great miracles (the parting of the red sea, the Israelites walking through the sea on dry ground and Pharaoh and his armies being drowned in the sea while pursuing the Israelites) , Moses here exalts the Lord saying that God is his strength and his song and that God has become his salvation.

Has God become your song??

Young men and women often tend to sing about their love, when in love. Where do they find the words? Where do they find the praise? It just flows out of their heart.

When you delight in someone, words come flowing from the depths of the heart. Moses, here is rejoicing because he and the Israelites had come out victorious from a seemingly impossible situation. The Red sea in front of them and Pharaoh and his armies behind.

God can do the impossible even when all doors seem closed. He's the one who opened a way in the sea; a way which none of them (the Israelites) saw until it was in front of their eyes. A way in which they were already walking before they realized it. A way that closed as soon as they (the Israelites) had crossed over.

A way that was opened only for them.

Search the Red Sea and you wouldn't find the path the Israelites trod on, because it was just for them. And so it will be for you. A path through the sea (your problem) in front of you. Please expect the unexpected to happen (for your good) because your God is the one who does not change and rejoice like Moses and the Israelites did when you experience the deliverance you longed for so long. Give your God praise.

September 26

She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the Lord." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children. (Genesis 29:35)

Every time that Leah bore a son on the previous three occasions, she had a great expectation that at least then her husband would love her. When she bore the first child to Jacob she named him Reuben saying, "It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now." When she gave birth to a son again, she said, "Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too and she named him Simeon." When she gave birth to yet another son, her expectations were very high. She said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me because I have borne him three sons. So he was named Levi.

But things did not work out for Leah as she expected. Though Jacob had bodily union with Leah, he did not love her or perhaps his love for Rachel was greater and it was evident to all including Leah.

She finally seems to have accepted her (unloved by husband) situation and so when the fourth son was born, she did not expect Jacob to love her any more than he actually was loving her, but she took a decision to praise the Lord instead.

If some situations in your life are seemingly impossible, it is better to concentrate on the Lord and focus upon his goodness and blessings and praise him rather than grumble/worry unduly about things that have not yet worked out. God can do the impossible, but sometimes we have to wait.

The Psalmist sang: I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD - in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD. (Psalm 116:17-19)

Will you sacrifice a thank offering? Will you praise him? It will give you peace of mind.

September 27

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (Proverbs 18:8) (Proverbs 26:22)

2 matching verses. Gossip sounds to be yummy stuff according to these. And it is, as we all know. Most of us would have indulged in it one time or the other, I guess. Spoken in hushed tones or with a beginning like, "I'll tell you something, but please don't tell anyone." "Promise me you won't." And then comes out the mystery stuff.

The writer of these verses sees the words of gossip going deep into the person. Perhaps like a seed falling into healthy soil. And as the seed sprouts and puts up a stem and leaves, so the words of the gossip comes back from inside the person who has heard it and sends it into another receptive ear. The cycle then goes on and on bringing grief to many. Believer's tend to involve themselves in gossip, not the worldly type though; it's called "spiritual gossip"

Whatever it be, the end result is pain, quarrels and misery.

Paul the Apostle specifically included the term while writing to the Corinthians. He said, "For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. (2 Corinthians 12:20)"

Some noteworthy tips for us from Proverbs regarding "gossip"

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. (Proverbs 11:13)

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:2)

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much. (Proverbs 20:19)

Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down. (Proverbs 26:20)

So, "To gossip or not to gossip"??? "NOT TO" surely!!!

September 28

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many. (Isaiah 51:1, 2)

"When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many."

The call came to Abraham and he set out from the midst of idol-worshippers to a land that God was going to show him. When God called him, He gave him a set of promises which He fulfilled eventually.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

With Abraham set out many others and they too were blessed. Abraham was a man of worship and wherever he went he set up an altar to the Lord and worshipped him there. Because of his obedience and faith in God, God blessed him in all things.

And the promise is for us too. The Bible says, Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring - not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (Romans 4:16)

God has called you through Jesus Christ to be a part of His kingdom here on earth as well as in eternity and there is no greater blessing than that.

September 29

Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right. (Psalm 106:3)

Is there anyone who constantly does what is right other than the Lord? I doubt. Maintaining justice and constantly doing right is no easy thing. Many people think that what they do is right, but unfortunately in the Lord's eyes it proves to be different.

A woman caught in adultery was once brought to Jesus. We read, The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do

you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. (John 8:3-9)

Jesus is full of compassion. It's not that he was siding the person who was sinning. He wanted to give her a chance to change her life. Not only that, He wanted to show her accusers that they were no better. Thirdly, He also wanted to show that " Mercy triumphs over judgement"

As James writes,

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! (James 2:12, 13)

Hope we too can find wisdom in that.

September 30

"You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance." (Psalm 66:12)

When people ride over our heads because we have decided to live for the Lord, it is so humiliating and painful. We know that we have done no wrong, yet when we are subject to abuse, it is so distressing and depressing. We may just feel like hiding in some place where no one can see us. Some cry their hearts out.

David once lamented and cried out to God:

O God, whom I praise, do not remain silent, for wicked and deceitful men have opened their mouths against me; they have spoken against me with lying tongues. With words of hatred they surround me; they attack me without cause. In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my friendship. (Psalm 109:1-5)

What good can such a situation bring in our lives?

The Bible says, " If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you." (1 Peter 4:14)

There are some who when they have lived according to worldly ways, no one had any complaints against them, but when they find Christ and start living for Him, almost all turn against them. But the Lord is just. He won't allow the suffering to continue forever. The Bible says,

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:10)

Always remember.. God stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save his life from those who condemn him.

October 1

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. (Proverbs 16:33)

In the Old Testament, we read of many instances where lots were cast to take decisions.

Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions. (Joshua 18:10)

The lot for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah. Then lots were cast for his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and the lot for the North Gate fell to him. (1 Chronicles 26:14)

Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. (Nehemiah 11:1)

Long back when I and my wife were in our spiritual infancy, we had a decision to take. I had resigned from my job as Physician in a hospital as I was too busy with my work and had very little time for God and also my family. We decided to start our own medical clinic, so that I could have enough time for spiritual matters and could spend more time together as a family. Those were the days when we did not have spiritual gifts of revelation.

We did not know which place would be ideal for opening a clinic, so we placed the matter in God's hands and waited for an indication from Him. After a few days since we did not get a clear sign, we cast lots with names of different places that we thought would be good for starting a clinic. Some were small towns and some big cities in Kerala. Then we prayed, "Lord, let us pick up the lot of whichever place you think would be best for us."

The lot that was picked up read "Eraviperoor." It's a small town in Kerala. We now know (after 14 years) that the decision was from the Lord for I have been having a successful stint there as Physician for 15 years by the grace of God. The beginnings of my work for the Lord was laid there. For 15 years running, the Lord is using me there to minister to believers and unbelievers alike.

Rarely do we cast lots now, for the Lord speaks to us through dreams and visions regarding the things we ask of Him. God is good; all the time.

October 2

Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. (Joshua 14:13)

One warrior blessing another.

It was of Caleb that the Lord had given a testimony and a promise.

But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. (Numbers 14:24)

That's what the Lord desires from us too--to follow Him wholeheartedly. Of course, it took time, but the Lord fulfilled His promise. The Lord is faithful and He brings to pass what He promises.

Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

(Joshua 14:13)

So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. (Joshua 14:14)

Not many know what part of the promised land Joshua received. We read of that in Joshua Ch. 19

When they had finished dividing the land into its allotted portions, the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them, as the LORD had commanded. They gave him the town he asked for - Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. And he built up the town and settled there. (Joshua 19:49,50)

Just rewards for the 2 warriors who followed the Lord wholeheartedly.

And the Lord has a promise for us too:
Our Promised Land- New Jerusalem.

October 3

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven (Matthew 16:17)

Peter here answered a question that the other 11 disciples could not. He got a revelation that the others did not get. The question was simple, but the answer was profound. Let's read,

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:13-16)

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are also called the "gifts of grace" [We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.....(Romans 12:6)] and the Father in heaven chose to give this revelation to Peter.

Why was Peter chosen to be given this revelation??

God decides which gift is to be given to each believer.

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

.....gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (Hebrews 2:4)

Of course the Bible also says,

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. (1 Corinthians 14:1)

We have to eagerly/earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but God will give what is best for us to edify others and build His kingdom here on earth.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1

Corinthians 12:7)

It's not because Peter was super-spiritual that he was given this revelation. And neither are we given spiritual gifts because we are above others. It's just grace.....AMAZING GRACE.

October 4

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35)

The Apostle Paul here mentions something the gospel writers have not mentioned i.e. Jesus saying, " It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Believers argue about so many topics in forums or otherwise depending upon their knowledge or what the Lord has revealed to them. Some things that we experience in our walk with God may not be experienced by our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Everyone may not speak in tongues, everyone may not see dreams or visions, everyone may not prophesy.

Those who experience things from the Lord know that it is legitimate and true, while those who do not experience the same may argue that such a thing does not exist. It doesn't mean that they are less spiritual, it's just that God may have blessed them in certain other areas of their spiritual life, perhaps like a- more knowledge of the Word or something else.

Sometimes it's better to keep certain things between us and God for others may not understand it.

It would have been difficult for Mary to explain how she was with child without knowing any man. Would others believe? Would others understand?

For a long time, I used to keep warning believers about a worldwide ministry where there were a lot of so called miracles and "Slain in the spirit" that it was not from God but satanic because the Lord had shown it to me through several dreams. Not many believed and even now don't believe.

Then one night, I saw another dream. Actually the preceding evening, i happened to have dinner with another servant of God and while we were discussing things, the matter of this ministry came up and he said his opinion in favor and I told him what the Lord had shown me. Finally as we departed I told him, "If you do not believe what I say, just ask the Lord whether what I say is true or not."

That night as I slept; in the dream, I happened to be standing in a place attending to my daily chores and suddenly Jesus came near me (in the dream I knew it was Jesus). He smiled and all He said was, 'I have not revealed this to everyone, hinting to me about what I had spoken the preceding evening.'

God has His ways and may not reveal everything to even the greatest of prophets. That's what Elisha once said,

"When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me why." (2 Kings 4:27) (Read v. 17 onwards for more understanding of this verse)

God is God and He has His ways; we'll be still learning about Him and His ways till we step into eternity to live with him.

October 5

Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing - grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God. (Joel 2:14)

The prophet Joel is telling Judah here that perhaps with fasting and weeping they can touch the heart of God and He may leave a blessing on them even though they had committed great iniquities.

He addressed the nation:

'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. (Joel 2:12, 13)

The specific sin that is mentioned in this book is - Drunkenness. It suggests a self-indulgent lifestyle pursued by those who value material things more than spiritual.

Do we as believers also value material things more than spiritual? Are our prayers always focused on the material than the spiritual? I think we can assess ourselves. Measure the amount of things that we pray for as "Material" & "Spiritual" and put the percentage on paper. Most of us will be amazed. Material scores very high. God help us.

Here's an exhortation from the Apostle Paul for all of us:

Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:15-20)

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (Ephesians 5:8-11)

October 6

"Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. (Genesis 49:21)

About Naphtali Moses said: "Naphtali is abounding with the favor of the Lord and is full of his blessing; he will inherit southward to the lake." (Deuteronomy 33:23)

How great it is to be abounding with favor of the Lord.

In the book of Esther we read of the King thrice telling Esther:

"What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you." (Esther 5:3)

As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It

will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." (Esther 5:6)

and as they were drinking wine on that second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." (Esther 7:2)

Esther had found favor in the king's eyes, so he wanted to give her whatever she asked for.

And to those who believe in Jesus and are living for him, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

October 7

**Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.
(Proverbs 15:17)**

Have you ever sat at the dinner table loaded with the best of foods and felt like not eating because of a strained relationship with whom you are living with- wife, husband, children, parents? Your favorite dish is on the table, but you don't feel like eating because of grief!

In some homes, when there is a fight, one or the other member usually says, "I don't feel like eating tonight." No amount of persuasion can change their hearts because they have lost their appetite because of a lack of love.

The writer of this proverb is basically saying that love is an essential ingredient even while we are at the dinner table. Satisfaction does not only come from the things that are on the dinner table, but from the joy of sharing and caring while we partake of the food.

There are some families where everyone eats separately and goes about their businesses, whether it be work or school or college. Other than family prayer, eating together at breakfast or dinner can be a time where one can share the joys of being together as a family. Can we find the time? It's always possible if we want to.

The writer of Proverbs also pens:

Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.
(Proverbs 17:1)

How true.

October 8

**I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it.
(Numbers 23:20)**

King Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, but God did not allow Balaam to curse. Here we read Balaam telling Balak that he has received a command to bless and that God has blessed Israel and he could not change it.

People of God should remember that God has blessed them and no one can change it, except for, they themselves. God has given us His Word and the Holy Spirit to guide us

each day of our lives here on earth.

Jesus promised:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:27-29)

No one can snatch us out of the Father's hand, but some believers take things for granted and walk out of the Father's hand and His protection and become easy prey for the devil.

Balaam could not curse Israel though he tried many times and from different places. Then he devised another plan to get Israel to sin and fall into disfavor with God. That's read in Revelation Ch. 2,v.14

"Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. (Revelation 2:14)"

God punished the Israelites for this sin of theirs and many died.

As long as we stay in the Father's hands we are blessed and no curse can come upon us. The Father's hands- that's where all our blessings are.

October 9

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. (John 1:16)

It's great when we experience one blessing after another coming from the Lord. The Bible says, " He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)

Salvation, healing, deliverance, peace, hope & joy; all these and much more because of the sacrifice of Jesus. And there's much more to come.

In the 2nd book of Corinthians we read,
"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Wonderful heavenly blessings await all those who have put their trust in Jesus and are living for Him. Things that cannot be even imagined by the human mind. Inventions and discoveries that have taken place till today can never even come close to the great heavenly blessings that await the believer in Jesus Christ. Revelation Ch.21 gives us a glimpse of eternity.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:2-4)

God says,

I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5)

It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. (Revelation 21:6)

He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. (Revelation 21:7)

October 10

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

David ends Psalm 28 by praying to God to save His people and bless them. Psalm 28 is a mixture of cries for mercy and praise for deliverance. David wanted God to punish the wicked because they cared not for God or His works.

David wanted God to shepherd His people and carry them. Surely he must have been thinking of the times he himself was a shepherd taking care of sheep and he knew how much care some sheep needed.

Paul the Apostle while writing to the Thessalonians said, ".....encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Some believers who have matured over the years in their walk with God are impatient that new believers cannot be so prompt and "up to the mark" as they want them to be. They often forget that it's all "Grace"

As the Apostle Paul said,

"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. (Ephesians 4:7)"
...without which we are nothing, so as to say. So let us be thankful that He has given us grace. Surely our God is one who shepherds His people and carries them.

The prophet Isaiah says,

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. (Isaiah 40:10, 11)

Jesus is our Good Shepherd; He truly cares for his sheep.

October 11

The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions. (Proverbs 12:27)

Do we prize our possessions? Do we take efforts to preserve the blessings that God gives us? Or do we just fritter it away, not giving adequate importance to it?

We read of such a happening in the Old Testament;

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction."

(Exodus 24:12)

When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God. (Exodus 31:1)

This was so sacred, yet in a moment of rage Moses destroyed them both.

"When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain." (Exodus 32:19)

He had been in the presence of the Lord 40 days and nights, eating no bread and drinking no water and then had received the stone tablets from the Lord. He had lost something invaluable. Now what was to be done? Perhaps after his anger had subsided, he must have thought about it deeply and prayed to the Lord about it. Later, we read;

At that time the LORD said to me, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden chest. I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you are to put them in the chest." So I made the ark out of acacia wood and chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. (Deuteronomy 10:1-3)

Moses now had to chisel out 2 stone tablets and carry it to the top of the mountain. And God reminded him that he had broken it.

Jesus healed the man who was invalid for 38 years at the pool of Bethesda, but later told him,

"See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." (John 5:14)

Prizing our possessions, keeping the blessings that we receive from the Lord is important. May the Holy Spirit help us in that.

October 12

As they make music they will sing, "All my fountains are in you." (Psalm 87:7)

People may promise us many things but they may not fulfill those promises. Every believer should understand that all their blessings come from Christ. He is their fountain that never dries up.

In the KJV Bible we read the same as....all my springs are in thee. (Psalm 87:7b)

If all the money that people promised through e-mails were to come true, we would have ranked somewhere near Bill Gates in terms of riches.

God has promised us that "He will never leave us nor forsake us."

When in a precarious situation, having to sacrifice his son Isaac and being asked where the sacrificial animal was, Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. (Genesis 22:8)

And after God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, seeing his obedience, God provided a ram for the sacrifice.

So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." (Genesis 22:14)

Our trust should be in the Lord and no one else. He will provide us with what we need because He is a good father. God may use human channels to provide us with what we need, but these human channels are not the fountain; the fountain is Christ and as the Bible says,

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

So let us hold on to the promises of God rather than the promises of men.

October 13

"What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'" Then the word of the LORD came to me: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. (Zechariah 4:7-9)

What if we start building and then can't finish? is the thought that often crosses our minds when we take up a project. Zerubbabel and friends had begun building the temple after the exile in Babylon, but what guarantees were there that they would complete it.

The world gives warranties, but the Lord gives a promise to us as a guarantee.

And the guarantee to Zerubbabel was, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it."

When you are unsure whether you are going to complete what you have begun, be it in your spiritual life or your work life or ministry, pick up the book full of guarantees and then you will see your faith rise to see it completed one day.

A mighty mountain stood in the way of Zerubbabel building the temple. It was King Darius 1. But regarding him God gave the promise that he would not be able to oppose or stop the building indefinitely. God would make the mighty mountaina level ground.

The Lord also promised Zerubbabel that his hands which had laid the foundation stone of the temple will also lay the capstone i.e. the final stone/the top stone. And that too with shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'

And it happened. So will the thing that you have started. So do not worry. Praise Jesus.

October 14

"While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven." (Luke 24:51)

The last thing that Jesus did while being taken up into heaven was blessing His disciples whom He loved so much. It was not unnatural for Him because all that He did while He

bodily lived on earth was "doing good to all."

Earlier he had told his disciples of his impending departure from their midst. He said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

Jesus came to save, to heal and to deliver humanity that was going into eternal destruction. He came to bless and now He's coming back to judge. He fulfilled the prophecies concerning Him and after doing everything that was required of Him by His Father, cried out, "It is finished."

His work was complete and His faithfulness to His Father was total. The blessing He thus received He now shares with us who have believed in His work on the cross. He is coming back and that's for sure, whether anyone believes it or not, but blessed are those who believe. Hope you are among us who believe. Here's an exhortation to all of us from Paul's letter to the Colossians,

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel..... (Colossians 1:22, 23)

October 15

He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. (Genesis 27:23)

The verse above describes how Jacob deceived his father Isaac to get a blessing that was his brother Esau's.

Some people, even believer's manipulate others to get certain things done or for their own selfish gains. It's like telling half-truth. You know that what you are saying is not totally the truth, but say it in a way that fulfils your motives. Well, Jesus once said, "...with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:2)

If that verse were taken in the matter of wrongs that we do, then Jacob really got back a good measure of deception when he reached Laban's house. 20 years of not so comfortable life. He landed in the house of a deceiver who changed his wages 10 times and Jacob himself gives his testimony to Laban in this manner:

"I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times." (Genesis 31:38-41)

Jacob left a little bit out of his testimony. How he had deceived his father and brother! Jacob- the deceiver went on to become Israel- one who prevails with God, but only after

God had dealt with him. May the Lord help us all to be without guile all through our life and receive blessings without manipulating others.

October 16

Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished! (Luke 1:45)

That's what Elizabeth told Mary when she met her. Was it easy for Mary to believe? I mean, an angel had come to her and said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:30-33)

That must have been quite startling for her to hear and she must have had a lot of questions to ask, but all she asked was one.

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34)

And she believed in what the angel answered her.

Some people ask me, "How far can I stretch this thing called "faith"?"

Well, it's very elastic as far as I know. Depends upon how much one has believed in what one has read in the Word of God.

I think what must have triggered faith in Mary was the following words that the angel told her.

"For nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

And so it is for the Lord even today.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

So shall we believe?

October 17

The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscalable wall. (Proverbs 18:11)

Imaginations run rife when people have wealth but no godly perspective. As the writer of Proverbs says, "It is their fortified city and they imagine it an unscalable wall."

Wealth may guarantee the best of treatment, but it cannot guarantee health and long life. Wealth may guarantee the best of homes, but it cannot guarantee peace and joy within. Jesus once told a parable,

"The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years.

Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." (Luke 12: 16-21)

But the Bible provides certain guarantees for those who love God, acknowledge Him and call upon Him.

"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." (Psalm 91:14- 16)

Being wealthy is not a sin and the Bible says that the blessing of the Lord brings wealth, but it must never in our imaginations become our fortified city or unscalable wall.

For the believer:

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. (Proverbs 18: 10)"

October 18

As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong." (Zechariah 8:13)

Here's a blessing for you if others don't care about you or you are an object of ridicule. There are other believers who often look down upon themselves and have an inferiority complex. An object of cursing either way.

Whatever it be, the Lord is able to save you and make you a blessing. He says, "so will I save you, and you will be a blessing"

Remember He is the one who makes warriors out of ordinary men and women. Gideon who once was a man full of fears and apprehensions was changed into a mighty warrior, all because the Lord spoke to him and strengthened him. The Lord said 3 important things to him to change his life:

1. The Lord is with you, mighty warrior (Judges 6:12)
2. Go in the strength that you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you? (Judges 6:14)
3. I will be with you and you will strike down all the Midianites together. (Judges 6:16)

Moses, when called by God to lead the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan was unwilling thinking of all the responsibilities he would have to shoulder, but God strengthened him by giving him miraculous signs and by giving him power.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. (Exodus 7:1, 2)

You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. You will be a blessing to many.

October 19

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request. (1 Chronicles 4:10)

Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." (1 Chronicles 4:9)

The prayer of Jabez is much talked about in Christian circles for its effectiveness. Jabez put his life's concerns before God in precise terms and he got what he asked for.

The time factor is the only thing that is not included in the "Ask and it shall be given you" promise in the gospels of Matthew & Luke.

And that can be troubling sometimes because believer's often get frustrated that God is not answering their prayers when they want it to be.

And what do you do if your prayers are not answered when you want them to be?

Jesus gave a clue of how this can be achieved, when He said, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matthew 11:12) (KJV)

"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it." (Matthew 11:12) (NIV)

Ever heard of getting violent in prayer? Literally banging on the doors of heaven. Holding on to promises in the Word and praying to God, "You must answer my prayer, you must....." It has been done in the past, so you too can do it.

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. (Genesis 32:24-29)

Such prayers have been answered before, so yours too will be.

October 20

They may curse, but you will bless; when they attack they will be put to shame, but your servant will rejoice. (Psalm 109:28)

David laments in this psalm about the hatred that his foes have towards him and then cries out for help from God.

He starts off by singing, "O God, whom I praise, do not remain silent, for wicked and deceitful men have opened their mouths against me; they have spoken against me with lying tongues. With words of hatred they surround me; they attack me without cause. In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. (Psalm 109:1-4)

Notable here is the last part of verse 4 where he says, "In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer"

Not many believers can really join with David and say, "I am a man/ woman of prayer" Why do believers spend so little time in prayer when they know that persistent prayer is what brings results? Satan is only too happy when believers don't pray. He knows they are easy prey for him when they don't pray.

Nights are good time for spending quality time with the Lord, unless you are working at nights, in which case part of your daytime should be spent in prayer. David was a man of prayer, a man who was after God's own heart and it's no wonder that God exalted him. God honors prayer and persistent prayer brings results.

The title of Psalm 18 reads, "For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord. He sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul." Truly, David was a man of prayer and we can do well to be the same. May the Holy Spirit help each one of us to be men and women of prayer.

October 21

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: `Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. (Zechariah 4:6)

Construction of the second temple, after the exile in Babylon was started in 536 B.C. on the Solomonic foundations leveled a half- century earlier by the Babylonians. There were several attempts to thwart it. Many enemies rose to hinder the building but finally in 516 B.C., the sixth year of the Persian emperor Darius 1, the temple was finally completed.

If you are out to build something, whether your spiritual life, a church or something in your life in this world, hindrances may come, but remember, "It's not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit" that you have to build and only then you will see victory.

There were much opposition to Nehemiah building the walls of Jerusalem, yet he and his men persisted in prayer and worked hard and they were able to complete the work in 52 days.

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble - burned as they are?" Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building - if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. (Nehemiah 4: 1- 6)

So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. (Nehemiah 6: 15)

Persist in prayer till the answer comes and the hindrance is removed. That mighty mountain before you will be flattened by the Spirit of the Lord. The victory is yours, so praise the Lord.

October 22

As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed. (Proverbs 26:14)

Ever heard of Christian sluggards? Well, they are a class of their own. Sluggard is defined as a slothful person. "Slothful" perhaps is related to "Sloth" (anyone

remember Sid the sloth from Ice Age)(my kids loved part 1.....No, we are not into movies if you thought so, except the rare clean ones). Sloth is a very slow paced animal.

There are many churches where some believers just never get there on time for the service. Not it's not the travel or any other hindrance, plain laziness and tardiness of believers that often drives the minister crazy, especially if it is a small congregation.

In the book of Joshua, we read a very salient point regarding the life of Joshua. Early in the morning Joshua (Joshua 3:1)

Joshua got up early the next morning (Joshua 6:12)

Early the next morning Joshua (Joshua 7:16)

Early the next morning Joshua (Joshua 8:10)

He had a very different lifestyle. And that's why he was so successful.

Unless a believer is working nights or is too sick, it is good if he/she is in the presence of the Lord early in the morning. Quite time can be quite a time if we have quiet around us. Just us (you) and the Lord.

It is said of Jesus in the Word,
....for zeal for your house consumes me (Psalm 69:9)

How about you brother, how about you sister. How's your zeal for the Lord and for his house?

I have asked my congregation in the past when I have seen regular late-comers whether they would do the same if they were to catch a flight!

Would they wait for you?

Reporting time -3 hours prior to the flight.

I think if the same were put in Church manuals, many would plan to cancel their membership.

Speaking about sluggards, the writer of Proverbs puts down some interesting thoughts. Let's end with that.

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! (Proverbs 6:6)

How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? (Proverbs 6:9)

As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26)

October 23

Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer." "The Lord bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow

townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. (Ruth 3:9-11)

The last part of v.11 has Boaz saying, "All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character."

Earlier, when Boaz met Ruth for the first time he had spoken kindly to her knowing her sacrificial character:

"I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband - how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." (Ruth 2: 11, 12)

Ruth had responded humbly saying,

"May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she said. "You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant - though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls." (Ruth 2: 13)

If a believer has a noble character, it will be very evident in the way he/she goes about living their daily life. We won't have to prove our nobility, it will be clear to other believers in the way we dress, speak and deal with others. There are some who use the perpendicular pronoun "I" much in their talks. You can be sure that such are not anywhere near being noble. "I did that..." "I said that..." "I know..." "I am the only..." Such will be their talks often.

Ruth had suffered and was willing to go the 2nd mile for her mother-in-law's sake. Not only Boaz, but all the townsmen knew that she was of a noble character.

Words spoken with humility and actions that convey the same message are the traits that go about in making a person one of noble character. May the Lord help us to be like that.

October 24

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:25)

"Not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it."

That's what is most important for a believer. When we hear the Word that is expounded to us, how much do we really take and practice in our lives?

Before entering Canaan, this is what God told the Israelites:

The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. (Deuteronomy 30: 9-15)

Unless the 'heard Word' becomes practical in our lives, we cannot receive the blessings.

When we act on the Word that we hear, God is happy that we are obedient to Him. There are many who give excuses because they do not want to obey the Word. This may be due to their fleshly desires or love for the world. Human relations can also be an obstacle for some, as they tend to please people rather than God and then the Word that they heard becomes null and void.

When we do not 'do' the Word that we hear, we are deceiving ourselves and no one else. So let us be 'doer's of the Word that we hear and receive God's blessings.

October 25

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

Many believers tend to focus more on the material aspects of life when they pray to God, asking God to fulfill this need and that need and often forget to pray for their spiritual life. Of course we all need to pray for our physical and material needs, but the spiritual aspect is more important.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth:

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Corinthians 3: 11-15)

Without building the spiritual aspect and concentrating only on the material needs causes the spiritual life to deteriorate and that causes an overall damage to our lives. We must pray first for God to bless us with a rich spiritual life, ability to pray more (and deeply), to read and meditate the Word more and to spend more time in worshipping God.

Jesus himself exhorted his disciples to seek the kingdom and its righteousness first.

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6: 31-33)

When our spiritual life takes a back seat, the material things that we have will not give us heavenly peace or joy. Every spiritual blessing is reserved for the believer and we should utilize it for our own edification and for the edification of others.

October 26

A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a crafty man. (Proverbs 12:2)

Ever seen crafty believers? If you have been a believer for quite a while, it's possible that you have encountered many.

It's true that they are saved and are worshipping the Lord but some of their older traits

have yet to leave them. Not really a new creature yet. The old things have not passed away.

In Psalm 18 we read the following:

To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. (Psalm 18:25, 26)

Truly, the Lord deals shrewdly with the crooked.

In the book of Acts, we read of a man named Simon who had practiced sorcery in Samaria, but when he saw the miracles that God performed through Phillip, he himself believed and was baptized. He even joined Phillip in his ministry, so as to say. But later on when he saw believer's receiving the Holy Spirit when Peter and John placed their hands on them, he offered them money to get the power. He was sternly rebuked by Peter who said, "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. (Acts 8:20,21)

Sadly these days, this is what many who are in the ministry are trying to do. Trying to buy the power of God with money and when they do not succeed, they settle for counterfeit powers which seal their fate.

These are the ones, who will in the end tell the Lord, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' (Matthew 7:22)

But the Lord will have only one answer for them and that is: 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' (Matthew 7:23)

Better be faithful and blameless and try to keep ourselves pure, for that is what God desires from us.

October 27

Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day." (Exodus 32:29)

This is the blessing that God conferred on the tribe of Levi because they took a decision not to stand with idol worshippers. When most of the Israelites were dancing and creating a ruckus around the golden calf that Aaron had made, Moses declared, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him. (Exodus 32:26)

There are many so called Christians who like the other 11 tribes even now stick on to their worldly ways, even idol worship, when God has called them to live a life of consecration. The Israelites suffered much because such an attitude of theirs. The Apostle Paul writes, Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did - and in one day twenty-three thousand

of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did - and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did - and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:5-11)

As Paul the apostle writes to the Corinthians, "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6: 16-1)

If you want the Lord Almighty to be your Father, you must separate yourselves from idol worshippers and worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth.

October 28

Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the Lord give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the Lord." Then they would go home. And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord. (1 Samuel 2:20, 21)

Does the promise, "Give and it shall be given unto you" work in this regard too? Well, it seems to have worked wonderfully for Hannah. She gave 'one' for the Lord's service and the Lord gave her 5 more.

Many people make vows to the Lord when they are in desperate situations like Hannah was, but later on after receiving their miracle, they forget their vows. God expects us to be faithful to Him when we make vows.

The Psalmists had this to say regarding their vows:

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. (Psalm 65:1)

I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you - vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. (Psalm 66:13, 14)

I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. (Psalm 116:14)

The Bible also advises us,

"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth; do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. (Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2, 4, 5)

As far as possible, don't make a vow, and if you do, fulfill it.

October 29

Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. "From this day on I will bless you. (Haggai 2:19)

Have you experienced a season of scarcity either spiritually or needs wise? Here is a

promise for you from the Lord to bless you from this day.

The question that often troubled the Israelites in their 40 year wandering in the desert was, "Can the Lord do yet another miracle?" They had seen the sea split apart and walked through it's midst, they had tasted the sweet water which was earlier bitter at Marah, they had seen the heavens pour down manna, still they doubted God when they were in the next trying situation.

God is faithful and asks us to believe that He can do the impossible even today. So can we just believe without asking a question?

Elijah never asked God why He had chosen the brook Kerith or why He had chosen the widow of Zarephath for him. He just believed that God knew what was best for him and obeyed. He never even questioned God as to why He should show himself to King Ahab who was searching to kill him, but went when God's command came to him. Faith and obedience both count.

The Bible says,

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6, 7, 19)

October 30

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

So many blessings for having regard for the weak!!!

Sometimes we need to ask ourselves, "Is our attitude like that of the Good Samaritan or like the priest and levite?" (Luke 10:29-37)

Actually in KJV we read the same as, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. (Psalm 41:1)"

According to the law given to Moses, the Israelites were to be kind to the poor at all times:

Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:10)

Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. (Leviticus 19:15)

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 23:22)

The Lord is concerned about the poor and it is His desire that we as believers be considerate towards them.

We can receive the blessings that comes attached to the acts of kindness that we do for the poor and destitute.

Most of the blessings that we read in the Word are conditional and depend upon us doing certain acts for receiving blessings. In the New Testament, however, blessings come to us because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (Romans 8: 32) but still the blessings above are valid and God will honor a person who honors His word. May the Holy Spirit strengthen us to be considerate towards the poor.

October 31

The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it. (Proverbs 10:22)

What's the point in having wealth but having trouble added to it? But this sad fact is what we see around us always. Perhaps you have a neighbor or relative who doesn't know the Lord but has all the riches of this world. They may appear content outwardly and in the presence of others, but mostly they lead a miserable life. Trouble brews in their life physically, mentally and within their families.

Sometimes we may feel envious of their wealthy lifestyle like Asaph the psalmist (But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. (Psalm 73:2, 3) But finally he realized the futility of the existence of such people-- Surely you(God) place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! (Psalm 73:18, 19)

The Bible has exhortations for the rich:

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. (1 Timothy 6:17)

Perhaps your blessing from the Lord is delayed, but be assured that when it comes, there will be no trouble added to it. You will be able to enjoy His abundant mercies (within biblical limits!!); no strings attached.

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. (Hebrews 10:35)

November 1

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. (Psalms 133:1-3)

How good and pleasant it is when brothers and for that matter, sisters live in unity. The psalmist here points out a genuine fact, that God bestows blessings where there is unity.

Where there is strife, like in the case of Jacob and Esau, problems keep brewing and there is no peace. Not only unity between brothers and sisters, unity among the members of our family is important for God to bless us. Where there is ill will between the members of a family, God's blessing upon that family is often hindered.

And how can God bless a church where there is no unity among the brothers and sisters.

Of course, it's possible to create a lot of noise in worship for all and sundry to know that God is among us, but the peace and joy that the Lord gives can never be upon that congregation.

Paul the Apostle writes to Philippians regarding this.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:1-4)

The Lord will bestow his blessing upon us, if we live in unity, whether it be our families or our churches.

November 2

He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs. (Psalms 107:35)

The wonder working power of God is so very evident in the Bible. The water miracles themselves are so many. He divides the water for His children to pass through, He turns water into blood to terrify the enemy, He brings water out of rocks to quench the thirst of His people, He turns water into wine to help a marriage party be a success, He walks on water to increase his disciples' faith, He steadies a boat swamped by furious waters of the sea and so many more.

The Bible says,

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

The more you read the Word, the more you hear the Word, the more your faith increases and more the miracles that you experience in your life.

Hebrews Ch.11 is one that can bolster our faith. It details of what all can be achieved with faith. To take the cases of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this is what the writer of Hebrews says;

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. (Hebrews 11:17-21)

Faith combined with action is very evident in all the water miracles described above. When God promises us something, He also expects us to act with faith for the miracle to ensue.

November 3

Then all the people left, each for his own home, and David returned home to bless his family. (1 Chronicles 16:43)

That's a really good thing to do- bless your family. There are many Christians who return home from work and then release all their pent up frustrations (acquired in the work place and while traveling) at home and upon their family.

I have heard of a story wherein a man who toiled all through the day used to do a strange thing on returning home each evening. He wore a necktie to work each day and on returning home, before he set foot in his house, he used to hang this tie on a tree nearby and then enter his house.

One day, a friend of his saw him doing this strange thing and asked him why he did that and in reply he said "All through the day, as I work, a lot of anger and frustration builds up in me and to see to it that I don't release all this on my family, I do this to remind me that none of this is their fault and I must leave all this outside before I enter my house so that there can be peace and joy."

An exhortation from the epistle of Peter goes like this:

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

The Apostle Paul also writes to the church at Colosse:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. (Colossians 3:19)

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. (Colossians 3:21)

Perhaps some of us can learn from this.

November 4

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing-- grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. (Joel 2:13, 14)

"Rend your heart." That literally means "tearing your heart." Not the physical one though. In the book of Jeremiah, we read God telling the Israelites to circumcise their hearts or face his wrath.

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done - burn with no one to quench it. (Jeremiah 4:4)

Jesus said, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:19)"

Sometimes we really have to tear our hearts to see how much "wickedness" is really there inside.

Moses specifically writes why God made Israel wander in the desert for 40 years.

"Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years; to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. (Deuteronomy 8:2)"

"to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart"

Does it take 40 years for God to know what's in our hearts? Never! But with God's knowing the faults in us, comes His plan to bring us to repentance and then receive His blessings. If we humble ourselves before the Lord and are obedient to His Word, He will not withhold any blessings from us.

November 5

The Lord your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! (Deuteronomy 1: 10, 11)

The promise was given long ago but found it's fulfillment in God's own time. The Lord is faithful and He will do what He has said if you hope and trust in Him. The Lord gave Abraham a promise that his descendants would be like the stars of the sky when he did not have a child of his own.

He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars - if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Genesis 15:5)

And then God reminded him again when he had 2 sons, but far from being like the stars of the sky.

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.... (Genesis 22:17)

In the book of Exodus, we read of Moses reminding God of his promises:

Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" (Exodus 32:13)

And the writer of Hebrews acknowledges God fulfilling his promise to Abraham.

And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. (Hebrews 11:12)

Abraham "hoped against hope" and this is what we also can do. Even if the odds are all against us, we can hold onto the promise that says,

"God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (1 Corinthians 1:9)"

November 6

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29- 31)

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6, 7)

The Lord reminded me these verses as I saw a couple of sparrows fly and settle on the

ground while I was walking to work. They seemed to be happily chirping away. Sandwiched between the sparrow sentences is the phrase- And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Well, I don't think we can by any means maintain the count unless we are totally bald. Even those with little hair may find it difficult to keep count, but God who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent does know even the minute details of our life. If God cares for the sparrows, wouldn't he care for you? You, who have been made in the image of God and for whom God sacrificed His only son Jesus.

The Bible tells us,

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

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, (Nahum 1:7)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

We must believe.

November 7

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. (Jeremiah 17:7, 8)

There's a basic difference in the someone saying, "I am fully confident that this will happen n my life" and "I am fully confident that the Lord will make this happen in my life"

Statement 'one' exudes confidence in one's own ability and the 'other' confidence and trust in the Lord. The Apostle Paul realized this and so he wrote, "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)

We read in the prophecy of Jeremiah:

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

The Apostle Paul says,

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

If you are like a tree planted by the water, that means drawing your nourishment regularly

from the Word of God; even when problems come, the Word that is there inside you will strengthen you to overcome the adversities and bear fruit that is lasting.

November 8

Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. (Proverbs 16:20)

The book of proverbs is one of practical wisdom and here is a verse that speaks of heeding instruction. There's so much of instruction going on in the Christian world and new believers are often confused as to what is right and what is wrong. The best way to know is by checking the Word of God and still if one is confused, wait at the feet of the Lord for Him to guide us in the right path.

We read in the Psalms;

Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. (Psalm 25:12)

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

If one is a seeker of the truth, the "Spirit of truth" will guide us in all the truth. When you are confused and seek the Lord with all your heart regarding a certain matter, He will reveal the truth to you.

Jesus said,

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:13-15)

God may send someone to you and speak about your "topic of confusion" without you even asking that person. The truth may be revealed to you from a book that you accidentally read and God will confirm it through various sources. If you are his child, He will guide you in the right path.

His promise, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" stays true even to this day and it will forever.

November 9

From there he went up to Beersheba. That night the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham." (Genesis 26:23, 24)

Did you notice the last part of v.24? It says, "for the sake of my servant Abraham."

God was going to bless Isaac because of his father's relationship with Him.

This verse emphasizes the importance of "godly parents" in the lives of children. If the parents are living close to God, obeying His Word, then God blesses the children because

of the parents' devotion to God.
The Psalmists sang,

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. (Psalm 112:1, 2)

Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD. (Psalm 128:1-4)

As parents we must realize that our relationship with God relates directly with the blessings our children receive. (I'm not implying that children don't receive blessings otherwise; God sends the rain and sun on the wicked too, leave alone children, but that's because of his mercy)

Abraham lived close to God, obeying Him in everything, not arguing or delaying in being obedient. That's why he became God's friend. And God decided that He was going to bless Isaac because of his father's devotion to Him.

November 10

Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers." Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence. (Genesis 47:7-10)

"The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult." This is what Jacob had to say about his life. Jacob had passed through a lot of difficulties in his life. Of course there were times of joy in his life too, but he remembered the sorrows more because they perhaps outnumbered the joys. There was a time when Jacob worked for getting Rachel as his wife. It was a great joy.

The Bible says, "Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. (Genesis 29:18-20)

Sometime later Jacob spoke to Laban, his father in law, in this manner:

"I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you." (Genesis 31:42)

Jacob got cheated by Laban quite a few times, but actually he was just reaping the

rewards for the deceptions that he orchestrated with his mother at home. God worked on Jacob as a potter works on clay and finally he became Israel who understood God's will and purpose for his life. God is working on our lives too, to make us fit for his heavenly kingdom.

November 11

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. (Revelation 1:3)

This is the first of the seven beatitudes (state of blessedness) in the book of Revelation. A significant verse which conveys the message that the matter in the book was meant for all of us and not only for people who lived during John's time.

Even in the Old Testament days, God was particular that his people, especially the leaders and kings read his laws and live according to it.

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:7, 8)

Regarding kings, God said,

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

Many Christians do not venture to read the book of Revelation because many things written in this book are in symbolic form and they find it difficult to understand them.

But the verse here clearly says that the ones who read, the ones who hear and the ones who take it to heart are blessed. The central message of the book is that the final showdown between God and Satan is imminent, Satan will increase his persecution of believers, believers must stand firm in their faith, they are sealed against any spiritual harm and will soon be vindicated when Christ returns, when the wicked are forever destroyed and God's people enter an eternity of glory and blessedness.

November 12

For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield. (Psalms 5:12)

The Lord's favor surrounds you if you have accepted Jesus as your righteousness and are living for Him. In short, it means you are shielded with favor. And when the Lord's favor is on you, he doesn't withhold any good thing from you.

And if this favor lasts for a lifetime and it really does if you are living close to the Lord,

what a blessed experience that would be. Not that you won't experience any problems in your earthly life, but His presence will let you overcome whatever difficulties come your way.

Moses prayed to God for his favor:

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands. (Psalm 90:17)

David prayed to the Lord for his favor:

But I pray to you, O LORD, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation. (Psalm 69:13)

The Bible says,

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. (Psalm 84:11)

He will grant you the peace that the world cannot give; a peace that passes all understanding. As the psalmist says, "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. (Psalm 30:5)"

November 13

"So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing, and Barzillai returned to his home." (2 Samuel 19:39)

One of the few people who helped David when he fled from the palace fearing his son Absalom was Barzillai, the Gileadite.

Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you." But Barzillai answered the king, "How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is good and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but why should the king reward me in this way? Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever pleases you." The king said, "Kimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever pleases you. And anything you desire from me I will do for you." So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing, and Barzillai returned to his home. (2 Samuel 19:31-39)

Later on, before David died, he remembered the kindness that Barzillai had shown and told Solomon to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai when he became king.

David never forgot those who had helped him when he was in distress. Jonathan, Saul's

son had helped him while he was on the run from Saul and we read of David returning the kindness.

David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "Your servant," he replied. The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet." "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied. "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." (2 Samuel 9:1-7)

It's always great if we can remember the kindness that people have shown us in our times of distress and do a kind act in return. Nothing to lose, everything to gain.

November 14

Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.....When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. (2 Samuel 2:4, 2 Samuel 5:3, 4)

The prophet Samuel had poured the anointing oil on David long back, but in reality it took a long time for David to sit on the throne as the ruler. God had told Samuel that He had chosen one of the sons of Jesse as the king of Israel and that he was to go and anoint him. Samuel obeyed God and did so. Then God went in to preparing David for becoming king. A shepherd of sheep had now to be transformed into a shepherd of God's people and God orchestrated circumstances to build David as a king. During those times, he went through several traumatic experiences, difficulties, pain and rejection; but finally matured into a better person who would win many great victories. God molded him and finally when he was ready, God made him sit on the throne.

After gaining victory over his enemies David sang,

He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. (Psalm 18:16-20)

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. (Psalm 18:32-35)

Jesus is also preparing us to sit with Him on the throne. That's what written in Revelation Ch.3.v.21

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."
Overcome....Sin...Satan....World....to sit on the throne.

November 15

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses. (Proverbs 28:27)

Giving gives great joy. And if the giver gives without expecting anything in return, that's a great achievement. Jesus once said, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." (Luke 14:12-14) Of course that's for those who are capable of giving banquets. But the rest can give according to their generosity, with the scale ranging from 1-100.

Even in the Old Testament times God was concerned about the poor and He placed certain laws for helping them.

"Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:10)"

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." (Leviticus 23:22)

"If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. (Leviticus 25:35)

There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11)
Regarding the virtuous woman, we read in the book of Proverbs

She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. (Proverbs 31:20)

Even our fasting gets God's approval when we do good to the poor.

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? (Isaiah 58:7)

It is God's will that we be concerned about the poor and help them, so that we "walk the faith" and glorify God.

November 16

Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. (Luke 6:20-23)

Exclude you, insult you and reject your name as evil.....because of the Son of Man. Yes, this does happen a lot. Many are rejected by their own family because of accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. Some are thrown out of houses. Some are persecuted with threats that they may even be killed. Some are even killed. Jesus said, "Rejoice" when such things happen. How can someone rejoice when such things happen? It's impossible unless one thinks of the final reward. If we think of the temporal in such situations, we cannot survive. As we read in the book of Hebrews regarding Moses, the great servant of God.

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." (Hebrews 11:24-26)

John the Apostle writes in the book of Revelation about the final state of the ones who have lived a life faithful to the Lord even though they faced trials while living on earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)

Are we looking for our final reward? If yes, then Jesus says, we are blessed.

November 17

The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household. Now King David was told, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. (2 Samuel 6:11, 12)

David's fear that God would punish him regarding the ark of God seems to have subsided with hearing that the household of Obed-Edom was blessed because of the ark being there for 3 months. The ark was earlier brought on a "new cart" by David and the Lord had struck Uzzah down because he ventured to hold the ark when the oxen stumbled. (Read 2 Samuel 6 if you do not know this happening). Transporting the ark on a cart was against God's specific command. The ark was designed to be carried as we read in the book of Exodus:

Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest to carry it. The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. (Exodus 25:12-15)

It was only to be carried by Levites of the family of Kohath (Numbers 4:15).

There a lot of "new carts" being propagated in Christianity these days, but it's always imperative that we check whether these line up with the Word of God.

David wanted to do a good thing by bringing the ark to the city of David, but he didn't do it

the right way the first time. Definitely he must have checked on what went wrong and when he did it the second time, he made sure that he did it the right way.

When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets. As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart. They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. (2 Samuel 6:13-17)

God was pleased, but this time his wife was not. Well, one can't please everyone. Better please God than man.

November 18

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. (Genesis 9:1-3)

A change is seen here, food-wise; God allowing Noah and his sons to have non-veg. food. Earlier Adam and Eve were told by God, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." (Genesis 1:29)

Later God placed restrictions for eating certain foods.

And wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. (Leviticus 7:26)

"There are some that only chew the cud or only have a split hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. (Leviticus 11:4)

Still later on in the New Testament, we read,

As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. (Romans 14:14)

"You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. (Acts 15:29)

Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall. (1 Corinthians 8:13)

Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, (1 Corinthians 10:25)

So, New Testament- wise it's basically our choice- what to eat, how much we eat, when

and where to eat, as long as we abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals. Also let us not eat certain foods in presence of others which can weaken their faith because of their lack of maturity in the faith. Moreover we have all to be careful to take care of our body, which is the temple of God and the Holy Spirit dwells in it, so let us eat wisely.

November 19

Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalms 2:12)

In the Old Testament, we read of Ruth, a Moabite woman who took refuge in God Almighty and she was commended for it by Boaz who said,

May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge. (Ruth 2:12)

David, the king of Israel sang,

My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior - from violent men you save me. (2 Samuel 22:3)

David also prayed,

But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. (Psalm 5:11)

Show the wonder of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. (Psalm 17:7)

Have you taken refuge in Jesus? The Bible says that "you are blessed" if you have. Have no fear, "He who has called you is faithful" and He will care about the small and big needs each day of your life.

Jesus is your Savior and He will save you from the wiles of the wicked one. He will shield you with His wings and carry you in His arms all the days of your life. He hears your sighs and groaning which no one else hears. He sees the tears that you shed in private. He understands the turmoil of your heart. He knows the depth of your loneliness because He has gone through Gethsemane. The problems that you are facing today will fade away as the sun sets at dusk and when His light shines on you, it will be glorious than the rising of the sun at dawn. So take heart and believe His word that says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

November 20

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

This is a multifaceted prayer asking for God's abundant blessings to be poured out individually, as a nation and upon mankind as a whole.

What would be the fate of mankind if God doesn't sustain him moment by moment?

Read the verses below and we will know what we really are:

The psalmist says,

You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before

you. Each man's life is but a breath. (Psalm 39:5)

You rebuke and discipline men for their sin; you consume their wealth like a moth - each man is but a breath. (Psalm 39:11)

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

The Israelites sinned against God by involving in idolatry and God punished them and they went into exile for 70 years. Yet God showed his love by promising to restore them.

This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. (Jeremiah 29:10)

The days are coming, declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. (Jeremiah 33:14)

God cares for us and nurtures us and sustains us despite our sins, shortcomings, unrighteousness and unfaithfulness. He is God and cannot change his nature. He loves you.

November 21

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. (John 20:29)

We are all familiar (If you are not, read John Ch.20) with the story of Thomas- disciple of Jesus- called Doubting Thomas by some. Thomas took a decision- "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." He needed a triple confirmation to believe. He wanted to see the nail marks, put his hand where the nails had pierced and put his hand into Jesus' side. Well, it takes much for some to believe. I guess the other disciples must have said, "Suit yourself."

The problem that we face when we say words of unbelief is that it's heard by the Lord too and that's what we see in the case of Thomas. A week later when Jesus came and stood in their midst again, He knew He had to deal with Thomas' doubt and He didn't mince words when He said, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." In plain words Jesus was saying, "Do you need any more proof, brother."

Abraham's story is one that should bolster a believer's faith. Regarding him, Paul writes to the Romans,

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:18-21)

And Paul also writes,

This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness -

for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. (Romans 4:22-24)

Yes, God will credit righteousness for all who believe that God is able to deliver in whatever matter they are praying for.

November 22

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! (Isaiah 30:18)

Have you been suffering for a long time regarding a particular problem in your life? This verse gives us hope that our God, who is a God of justice, blesses those who wait patiently for him. Waiting is seldom easy, but it certainly does bring results. The longer the wait, the more we tend to lose our patience. We grumble, we fight and we do silly things because the frustration is intense.

The Bible says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7, The time factor is not mentioned here and that often frustrates believers. Of course the promise is valid now as it was when it was said originally. But "when dear Lord?" ask some.

And the answer is "In God's perfect time." The Bible says, "We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. (James 5:11)

Job was blessed with a double portion and much more was restored than what he had lost. We read in the last chapter of the book of Job;

The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so he died, old and full of years. (Job 42:12-17)

November 23

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

Righteousness basically means doing the right thing or acting in accord with divine law. Sometimes we know what the right thing is, yet we do wrong. Why? We all have different reasons. We all have different weaknesses and we all respond to situations in different ways. Often we try to justify our wrongs.

Paul the great apostle confessed, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do

not want to do - this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (Romans 7:15-24)

There's always a fight going on inside us between the flesh and the spirit.

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. (Galatians 5:17)

Unless we are totally yielded to the spirit of God, we often do that which is unpleasing to God. This can change only if we hunger and thirst for righteousness, desiring to do that which is pleasing to God.

The Apostle Paul exhorts believers in this manner:

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:24, 25)

May the Lord help each one of us to do that.

November 24

He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy. (Proverbs 14:21)

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' ; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'" "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)

The priest and the Levite could have helped but perhaps there were many things that hindered them from helping. Perhaps they did not want to get involved, perhaps it was a prestige issue, perhaps they were not concerned about his sufferings, perhaps they judged him saying that it was his own fault and so on and so forth. There could be a 101 guesses why they just passed by uncaringly.

But the Samaritan cared like the half dead man was someone from his own family and did everything that was in his capacity to ease his pains without asking questions. Were there risks involved? Of course; but he was willing to go the second mile.

We often justify our "not helping others" by asking questions and proving our point, but Jesus knows our hearts.

The Bible says,

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

November 25

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you. (Psalms 84:12)

Is our walk blameless? Well; it better be, for such ones have no good withheld from them by the Lord. 24 yrs. after God called Abraham, at the age of 99, the Lord appeared to him again and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. (Genesis 17:1)" And Abraham must have said to himself, "All these 24 years I have been doing that Lord"

But we read in the very next verse that God wanted to establish a covenant between Himself and Abraham and so He was asking him to renew his relationship with Him. God said,

I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers. Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram ; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. (Genesis 17:2-11)

Abraham's obedience was immediate, for the Bible says,

On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. (Genesis 17:23)

Abraham was blameless in God's presence so God blessed him in everything.

Blameless means "being without guile" and "no good will the Lord withhold" from such a person. The Lord will be a sun and shield to such a person and bestow favor and honor too.

November 26

As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is

the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." (Luke 11:27,28)

Jesus could have put in a good word in this circumstance for His mother but He preferred not to; rather He chose to highlight the fact that He was more interested in calling them blessed "who were willing to hear the Word and obey it." Jesus preferred not to accept praise from men, for He knew, praise for Him came from His father. Sometimes God does not show us the results of our work for Him, for we may get puffed up by the praise that people shower upon us.

There are many servants of God who lament that not much evidence is seen after they pray for others and not many testify about their efforts. That is only because God knows that in the early stages of our ministerial work, we may not be able to handle the praise showered on us and we may become puffed up, steal God's glory and become targets for the devil. It's not that people are not benefited by us praying for them, God just hides it so that we do not fall, because of the praise.

Jesus said, "**Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.**"

Obedience is highly esteemed by God. Look at the Old Testament character called Saul. God anointed him as the king of Israel, but he lacked obedience to God's counsel. The prophet Samuel rebuked him for that and said;

"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king." (1 Samuel 15:22, 23)

Let us make it a point to obey the Word of God at all times for God does not withhold any blessings from such persons.

November 27

Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord. (Psalms 89:15)

It's very evident here that the psalmist knows that spiritual growth is a process. We do not mature spiritually overnight. Our relationship with God has to be built up by acknowledging that He is right in all things that pertain to our lives and we have to get in tune with His requirements. Of course there are believers who think that they "know it all" but that's just a flight of imagination. There are many new things to be learnt each day from the Lord. Some Christians have confessed that what they thought and spoke and preached several years back were just not perfect and now they have changed their ideas regarding certain aspects of the Word.

This is what the Apostle Paul had to tell the believers at Ephesus,

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. (Ephesians 1:17, 18)

We read in the book of Acts, how God brought about a great change in the life of a Jew

named Apollos. He had knowledge regarding God, but that was not enough.

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (Acts 18:24-28)

As we keep learning the "light of His presence" shines more brightly and we mature day by day and this process will continue till we step into eternity to live with the Lord. Happy journey friends.

November 28

**So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
(Galatians 3:9)**

Abraham went through some tough testing to become the 'man of faith' that he finally became. He left his ancestral home because God asked him to, set out for an unseen land because God asked him to, built altars wherever he pitched tent to worship the Lord who called him, hoped against hope because he believed that God who promised would fulfill it, overcame periods of disbelief by hearing God's voice and obeying it and looked to the ultimate reward that he was to get.

Regarding him, the author of Hebrews says,

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith Abraham, even though he was past age - and Sarah herself was barren - was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. (Hebrews 11:8-12)

Regarding him, the Apostle James writes,

Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. (James 2:21, 22)

Faith building exercises are never easy and most of us believers never enjoy them.

I have seen people puffing and panting when they try to build their bodies in the gym. It's never easy, picking up those weights, doing those bench presses or sit ups or push ups or running long distances. But after a while they see the ultimate results and that brings the joy.

The Bible says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

So let us seek God earnestly and be blessed along with Abraham, "the man of faith."

November 29

David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging me with my own hands. (1 Samuel 25:32, 33)

Nabal, a wealthy man of Maon had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.

While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!'" "Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them." When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited. Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. (1 Samuel 25:4-13)

A servant of Nabal told Abigail, Nabal's wife, of all that had happened and also that David was marching towards them to kill everyone.

She acted quickly, and rode herself to David carrying gifts and talked wisely when she met David, praising him for his goodness and kindness.

David here blesses Abigail for her good judgment. Abigail's husband had acted foolishly towards David and now the only hope of saving her family from annihilation was pleading for mercy from David. She did not think of her family status here; just fell at David's feet and asked for forgiveness for her husband's arrogance.

Good judgment and a humble attitude. Abigail had both.

If both husband and wife act childishly and are proud and unrelenting, it will only lead to the destruction of the family.

The Bible says, "The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down." (Proverbs 14:1)

November 30

The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. (Judges 13:24)

This was how God began preparing Samson to become a judge of Israel.

Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife." His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. (Judges 14:1-6)

Of course, we don't do such things now to demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit, but power from on high is available for every believer who will step out with faith according to the leading of the Spirit.

In the New Testament, we read of Peter and John, 2 of Jesus' disciples venturing into the faith realm and witnessing a great miracle.

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer - at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. (Acts 3:1-8)

Has the Holy Spirit been stirring you recently to take a new decision, to step out into the ministry or to take up a new challenge in your ministry?

Often it is through the "still small voice" that God speaks to us. And some of us tend to ignore it because it may not be too comfortable a thing. Well, usually God doesn't force things upon us, but what He chooses for us is the best. It may appear difficult for us at the onset, but on the long run we will experience the presence of God in a mighty way, because we have been obedient to Him.

December 1

Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. (Proverbs 28:14)

If one fears the Lord, he/she will always be living a life pleasing to the Lord. There are many who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, but then they are so attached to the world that they live as they please. Often they harden their hearts and then they land up in troubles, which could have been avoided if they obeyed the Lord and His word. The Lord is gracious and long suffering, merciful and abounding in steadfast love, but we must not trespass the limits that He has kept for us as Christians.

Solomon was blessed abundantly by God, but he trespassed the laws that God wanted him

to obey and the anger of the Lord burned against him. Some of the things he was not supposed to do, he did and some things that he should have done as a king, he didn't do.

According to the law of Moses,

The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:16-20)

Solomon broke these laws and God rejected him as king. If we fear the Lord we will be careful with our words, with our deeds and in all our dealings with others knowing that the Lord is always watching us. It's not because we fear that we do these things; it's because we love the Lord, because what He did for us is unsurpassable.

December 2

As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. (James 5:11)

Perseverance is not so easy to achieve. Of course, we can always learn. Some believers think, "Why can't Jesus just answer everything fast and save trouble for us and for Him. Why wait till the 4th watch of the night. Might have had a good night's rest if He had come in the 1st watch." Well, He has His reasons for not showing up earlier, some of which we may not know about. Job never could understand why he was suffering. But he didn't throw in the towel. He just hung in there till the ordeal was over. Of course, he offered God a few options - to destroy him totally, kill him fast; but nothing seemed to work. Job lamented:

Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say. Would he oppose me with great power? No, he would not press charges against me. There an upright man could present his case before him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge. "But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. "But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him; when I think of all this, I fear him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me. (Job 23:2-16)

If any of you are passing through such a phase, just hang in there. Deliverance is just around the corner. As the above verse says, "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5:3, 4)

December 3

Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, most blessed of tent-dwelling women. (Judges 5:24)

It doesn't take much time for God to exalt someone if He wishes. Here's a woman who did not flinch when she had to do the required. She hammered a tent peg into the enemy's skull. I am not advising you women who are reading this to do that. On the contrary, I advise you to do that which God has called you to. Don't waste that talent that God has given you. Put it to use and glorify God. And men, if God has endowed you with power, don't stand in the shadow of someone else and see someone else being exalted by God. Deborah the prophetess, who at one time led Israel, instructed Barak to go and war against the Canaanites and capture Sisera, the commander of their army. She gave him the Lord's counsel that God would surely give the enemy into his hands. But this is what Barak replied. "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go."

And this is what Deborah had to say in return. "Very well, I will go with you. But because the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will hand Sisera to a woman. The rest as they say is history, of how God allowed a woman called Jael to finish off Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army.

We read in the book of Judges:

Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there were friendly relations between Jabin king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite. Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she put a covering over him. "I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up. "Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say 'No.'" But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died. Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. "Come," she said, "I will show you the man you're looking for." So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple - dead. (Judges 4:17-22)

After the whole thing was over, I believe Barak must have said many times, "If only I had.....If only I had....."Let that not happen in your case my friend. Just go out and do what God has called you to.

December 4

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your

work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)

It's very evident from the above passage that a hard heart and a tight fist go together. Some ask "If God is so concerned about the poor, why does he not remove their poverty?" The answer is "God works through human channels and when the channels become narrow (hardhearted/tightfisted) God's plan of alleviating poverty goes awry."

Some of the interesting laws given by God to the Israelites concerning the poor were:

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 23:22)

If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. (Leviticus 25:25)

If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. (Leviticus 25:35)

If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. (Leviticus 25:39)

If the man is poor, do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession. (Deuteronomy 24:12)

Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns. Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin. (Deuteronomy 24:14, 15)

So how much to give and with how much will God be pleased? The answer is "As much as we can give with a cheerful heart."

And we can improve as we grow closer to the Lord. The Bible says, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

December 5

The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything. (Deuteronomy 2:7)

Moses, the man of God had this to say to the Israelites before they entered Canaan, the promised land:

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your

clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. (Deuteronomy 8:2-5)

He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. (Deuteronomy 8:15, 16)

40 years in the desert without any hotels/restaurants, no motored vehicles, no air conditioning, no electricity, no permanent earthly source of food or water, no garment or footwear shops, not even barber shops; yet according to Moses, they lacked nothing.

With all or most of these, we feel we don't have enough. God is so good that He gives us all things richly to enjoy. Let us be grateful to God for all that He has given us. He blesses the work of our hands, watches over our journeys and is always with us as Immanuel.

December 6

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, `This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:22-27)

There couldn't have been a better way of proclaiming blessings over the vast multitude that was walking through the wilderness to the promised land of Canaan.

Wonderful if we could bless our children in this manner. So many great blessings in a few verses. Some people have regrets that they did not do what they had to do as parents when they had to do what they had to do. (If that's a bit complex, please read it again). Well, the best thing to do is forget the past and look to the future. There's no point in crying over spilt milk. The Lord is with you if you are on track with Him.

The psalmist David prayed to the Lord to make his face to shine upon him:

Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave. Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous. How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues. (Psalm 31:16-20)

Again in Psalms 119 we read the psalmist praying in a similar manner:

Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. (Psalm 119:135)

You too can pray that the Lord makes his face to shine upon you and your family and he will do it. Give Him your burdens and your failures and start anew. Not much is lost yet. The Lord can straighten out things like only He can. If your children are with you, for a change, call them and proclaim this blessing over them; if they are away from you just think about them and proclaim this blessing over them. If they are not in sync with the Lord, pray and proclaim this over them till you see a visible change and then give thanks to the Lord for another answered prayer.

December 7

Worship the LORD your God and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span. (Exodus 23:25)

This is a promise that God gave the Israelites as they traveled to the promised land. God showed that he cared for them by promising to bless their food and water and by healing them.

Some of the other promises that God would give them if they obeyed his laws were as follows:

You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock - the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven. The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you. The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear you. The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity - in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground - in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you. The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. (Deuteronomy 28: 3-13)

So many blessings for worshipping God! So many blessings for obeying him! It's amazing.

God loves us worshipping him and it must be a major resolution every day of our lives. Start the day and end the day worshipping God, reading the Word and praying to Him.

A full life span without health or a short life span is not what God has planned for you. Worship Him and obey his Word. That will bring you many wonderful blessings.

December 8

"Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers." (Genesis 49:22-26)

Joseph here is called the "prince among the brothers."

He was spiritually rich compared to his brothers who were at one time spiritually and morally bankrupt. Jealousy and bitter envy were their undesirable qualities. But God was faithful. Though He let Joseph suffer for a while, He saw to it that his brothers came and fell at his feet, not because Joseph desired it, but because God felt that, that would be the right thing.

Joseph faced several other problems, but God helped him to overcome them and finally God exalted him to a very high position in Egypt, the land where he came to as a slave. We read in the book of Genesis:

So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you." So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:38-43)

Regarding this the Psalmist says,

He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; and he sent a man before them - Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true. The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom. (Psalm 105:16-22)

If we are faithful, God will see to it that those who hurt us unwontedly are brought to book, not because we desire it, but because He is a righteous God. We serve a just God and he will bless us if we remain humble in his presence.

December 9

LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. (Psalm 16:5)

The psalmist here says that God has made his lot secure. Financial security is a concern for many. But you do not have to fear. God will give you "not what you deserve" (because we do not deserve anything) but "what He has set apart for you."

When God blessed King David in a great way and promised to bless him even more, this is what he had to say:

"Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? "What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel - the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt. You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God. "And now, LORD God,

keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you. "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever."
(2 Samuel 7:18- 29)

Let me tell you dear brother/sister in Christ, God has many blessings set apart for you this year. By blessings I mean, blessings that He has reserved for you alone; some special blessings that others may not receive.

Our God shows no favoritism. He loves you more than anyone else because you are His child. And each one of us can say that. "Yes, God loves me more than anyone else."

December 10

The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. (Genesis 39:2)

Joseph, sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelite merchants was bought by Potiphar, a captain of the guard in Egypt.

We read in Genesis 39:

When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.... (Genesis 39: 3-6)

Read this part carefully.

The Bible says, "From the time Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph."

God blessed an unbeliever like Potiphar because Joseph was working for him.

You as a believer may be working for a non-believer company or firm, but did you know that because of you God is blessing the institution that you are working in? Do not underestimate your role in the heights/glory that the institution is reaching. Perhaps no one may know it or some people like Potiphar and his wife may even not give due credit to you for the same, but you are precious in God's sight.

Not only that, if you are the only one saved in your family, God will bless the other members in your family because of you. The Bible says,

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham,

your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many. (Isaiah 51:1, 2)

So walk your faith. You will receive your reward one day.

December 11

So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him and commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham?" (Genesis 28:1-4)

How great it is when parents bless their children despite their faults and shortcomings. Some parents always keep chiding their offspring's to such an extent that they get desperate, depressed and despondent.

Isaac here is blessing his son Jacob who deceived him. He is giving him instructions for wise living and blessing his future.

Jacob had deceived his father and brother by disguising himself as his brother and had forced his blind father to bless him with the blessings that rightly should have been his brother's.

He suffered much because of his deceiving nature but finally was blessed by God after he passed through several trials that changed his character.

From "deceiver" he became "one who strives with God and wins". His father's blessings came true.

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. (Genesis 32:24-29)

Notable in the Word of God, in this context is a verse in Colossians. "Fathers do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. (Ch.3, v.21)

We must teach our children to live a disciplined life and also discipline them when needed but also keep the limits which God has kept for parents.

December 12

Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. (Proverbs 10:6)

In the book of Esther we read the following,

"Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. "And

that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate. His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built. (Esther 5:11-14)

Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high.....That's the height of pride and arrogance. One doesn't need a 75 feet high gallows to hang a man of say, maximum 6 feet high. But that is what Haman & co. decided.

The Bible says,

"For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." (Psalm 1:6)

Mordecai was a righteous man and God was not willing to hand him into the enemy's hands. The fasting and praying of Esther and Mordecai were answered. God turned the tables literally and we read,

"Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Hang him on it!"

So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided. (Esther 7:9,10)

How true the Bible when it says,

"Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. (Psalm 34:21)"

So what then about the one who was targeted.

Again we read in the book of Esther,

"Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. And the city of Susa held a joyous celebration." (Esther 8:15)

"Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful." (Esther 9:4)

Praise God for His faithfulness.

December 13

My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. (Psalm 63:5)

Have you been feeding your soul as much as you have been feeding your body? It's vital because God says, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." While worldly pursuits bring only temporary satisfaction, feeding your soul with spiritual food will bring lasting satisfaction.

How can one satisfy soul hunger? By reading and meditating on the Word of God, by praising and worshipping God and by praying to God.

The psalmists had hunger for the living God as we read in several of the psalms.

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

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. (Psalm 63:1-4)

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (Psalm 84:1, 2)

If you have a thirst for God, he will satisfy you by giving you the living waters.

In Psalm 27, we read of David asking a particular blessing from God.

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

Is that your desire too?

December 14

Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. (Genesis 26:12, 13)

The story begins in this manner:

Now there was a famine in the land - besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time - and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar. The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws." So Isaac stayed in Gerar. (Genesis 26:1-6)

God forbade Isaac from going to the land of Egypt even though the famine was severe in the land where Isaac lived. Isaac was obedient and trust in God Almighty, who had blessed his father. He planted crops in the land where famine reigned. But God did a mighty miracle for him. He reaped a hundredfold because the Lord blessed him.

A blessing so great that even Isaac's enemies envied him. A 100 fold harvest and that too in a land under the grip of famine. It was the Lord's doing and no one could stop it.

His enemies were now afraid of him.

Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us." So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. (Genesis 26:16, 17)

Do you believe that God is able to bless you abundantly however dire the situations or circumstances be now in your life?

Remember what Jesus told Martha, sister of Lazarus, "If you believe, you will see the glory of God." And see she did, when her dead brother came out of the cave alive, when Jesus commanded him to.

A great blessing awaits you, just as God Almighty blessed Isaac. Be obedient to him at all times.

December 15

Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. (Genesis 24:1)

Read that carefully. "The Lord had blessed him in every way."

Not just spiritually, but the Lord had blessed him in every sphere of his life. No doubt some of the blessings took some time to come, but they finally came.

Abraham's great desire to see a child from Sarah his wife was fulfilled at the age of 100. Sarah was 90 years old then.

His desire that Ishmael, his son from Hagar be blessed was fulfilled by God.

His desire to get a wife for his son Isaac from his own people was fulfilled by God.

Abraham believed God and that was credited to him as righteousness. His blessings followed.

The Apostle Paul writes to the Romans,

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness - for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. (Romans 4:18-24)

Jesus wants to bless us in every sphere of our lives but this calls for obedience.

24 years after Abraham had left the Ur of the Chaldeans (he was 99 now), the Lord spoke to him and said, "I am the Lord Almighty, walk before me and be blameless."

Abraham obeyed God Almighty and he was truly blessed. We too can be blessed similarly if we obey the Lord and are blameless.

December 16

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Genesis 22:15-18)

If there was a Ph.D. to be taken in faith, Abraham would have qualified and passed with flying colors. This was no small test of his faith, it was the ultimate; offering his loving son as a sacrifice to God.

3 days of travel would only have increased Abraham's agony. Could Isaac read the thoughts of his father's mind? Did it show on Abraham's face?

The Bible says,

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. (Genesis 22:7-13)

Abraham obeyed God even though what God asked him to do was very agonizing. And the blessings (as we read in the title verses) were greater. He finally didn't have to sacrifice his son, for God had arranged an alternate sacrifice. God truly is Jehovah Jireh, Our Provider.

December 17

When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." (Genesis 18:16-19)

God had decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and he wanted to tell Abraham what he was going to do. Seems like one friend telling another his plans. Yes, the Bible says, Abraham was God's friend because of the faith that he had in God. When God told Abraham what we was going to do, Abraham started pleading with God to spare his nephew Lot who was in Sodom.

We read in Genesis 18,

Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing - to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it." Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He

answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." (Genesis 18:23-32)

Because of Abraham's pleadings, God decided to spare Lot and family before destroying the cities.

Not only Abraham, God wants each one of His children to be a blessing to others. Ask yourself a question. Are you a blessing to others? Or is it the opposite? Jesus said, "Let your shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

God has chosen us to bear fruit; fruit that will last. He has blessed us so that we may be a blessing to others. So may it be with each one of us.

December 18

You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. (Psalm 128:2)

If we cannot enjoy a blessing, can it be called a blessing? The answer is 'no', but only up to an extent because sometimes a blessing becomes a blessing only in the fullness of time. It's like a family inheritance that has come to your name, but you are still a minor and cannot really have authority over it until you reach a certain age.

Even regarding spiritual blessings, the fullness of some of these can be enjoyed by us only with the maturity that we attain in the presence of God. And maturity doesn't come easily. It takes years. It's a process and when we really do mature we are able to enjoy the depths of the blessing.

A woman who desires a child is overjoyed when she knows that she is pregnant, but the blessing has just conceived in her body. It has to grow, it has to mature, and she has to wait before it really becomes a blessing that she can really enjoy.

What's that blessing that the Lord has given you but you are not able to enjoy to the full? Wait & pray, let the Lord do His work. He will make it a source of great joy in your life.

The Bible says,

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6, 7)

December 19

God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." (Genesis 17:15, 16)

God is faithful. He does what He says. God is not man that He should change His promises. If He has given you a promise, He will fulfill it at His time. A change of name, a change for the good, a greater blessing. If Abraham and Sarah were living in our times, they would have had to notify their change of names. Imagine this advertisement on the 2nd page of your local newspaper.

Notifying all the change of our names with effect from today :

Abram Terah- Now changed to "Abraham Terah"
Sarai Abram- Now changed to "Sarah Abraham"

The name "Abram" meant "high father" while "Abraham" meant "father of many".
The name "Sarai" meant "contentious" while Sarah meant "princess".

To Peter, Jesus said,

"You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter). (John 1:42)

Even in the final book of the Bible, we read of a blessing where God will give new names to the "one who overcomes":

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it. (Revelation 2:17)

A name change for everyone who overcomes- Doesn't that sound exciting?

December 20

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

God could have blessed Abraham in the Ur of the Chaldeans itself. But He chose not to. God set "Get Out" from the midst of idol worshippers and I have set apart great many blessings for you and your family.

Abraham was not living in poverty in the Ur of the Chaldeans. He had enough material blessings. But God wanted to bless him more in every sphere of his life. Abraham obeyed God and the rest as they say is 'history'. In short, as Moses writes "God blessed him in everything" (Genesis 24:1)

When God asked Moses to tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt to release the Israelites to go to Canaan, Moses obeyed. But Pharaoh was adamant despite God sending different plagues on him and the Egyptians..

Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land." But Moses said, "That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? We must take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he commands us." (Exodus 8:25-27)

God's command to Moses and the Israelites was to travel 3 days into the desert and then worship him.

Writing to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul tells the believers God's words:

"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18)

Here Paul wanted the believers to separate themselves from idol worshippers and worship God in spirit and in truth.

That's what God wants all his children to do.

December 21

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:2, 3)

Just a thought! Was God tired from working 6 days that He rested? Of course not! He cannot and does not tire because He is El Shaddai- Almighty God. Perhaps he was setting an example for man to follow.

There are people who work all 7 days. Perhaps it's because they have to do it because of pressures in their lives, perhaps it's just wanting to earn a little more, perhaps to avoid tensions at home and so on and so forth. There could be many other reasons.

The fact is we all need to rest and recuperate because we are not like God who does not tire. A day off from work is a good thing, even if we are in the ministry. Spending time with family, meditating on God and His Word and just resting. It rejuvenates our body, mind, soul and spirit.

During his ministry, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, we read of Jesus telling his disciples, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6:31)

Just imagine, God telling the angels after 6 days of creation- I am taking a day off. No phone calls please and put that "Do not disturb" sign on my door. Are you resting enough?

December 22

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." (Genesis 1:26-29)

The 2 key words in this passage are "God's image" and "rule".

Thrice here we read God emphasizing the word "His image". He did not create animals and birds or sea creatures in His image. His creation of humanity was special and He decided that Adam and Eve were to be just like Him. The fall of man from Grace has distorted that image but to those who accept Jesus as Savior and live for Him, the Holy Spirit works on them to bring them to the original image in which God had created man.

The other key word here is "rule".

God created man to rule over His creations, not to worship them. Yet we see scores of people worshipping God's creations rather than the Creator.

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. (Romans 1:20-23)

God has given his creations to us as a blessing for our lives and so they should be.

To His most loved creation i.e. us, his blessings are the same as they were originally- be fruitful, increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over his creations and enjoy his loving kindness.

December 23

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." (Genesis 1:20-22)

Interestingly, the first blessing in the Bible was given by God Almighty to water creatures and birds. God loves His creations and blessed these creations of His to multiply and be fruitful.

Not all sea creatures or birds may look beautiful to us, but for the Creator, whatever He created looked good.

All things were created by Jesus and for Jesus; that's what we read in the book of Colossians;

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. (Colossians 1:15, 16)

The Psalmist David sang,

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! (Psalm 139:13-17)

Our appearance may not be pleasing to all, but God loves us all the same. Remember, you are His creation and He loves you just as you are.

December 24

Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. (Psalm 112:1, 2)

How's your relationship with the Lord? These verses say that your children's blessings are linked to that. These are not isolated verses, for many blessings have been promised for children of the upright.

The Bible says,

But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children - (Psalm 103:17)

He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. (Proverbs 14:26)

The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him. (Proverbs 20:7)

When God spoke to Isaac regarding blessing him, he said,

"I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws." (Genesis 26:4,5)

AND HE AGAIN TOLD HIM....

"I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham." (Genesis 26:24)

God was blessing Isaac because his father Abraham was obedient to Him and lived a life pleasing to him.

Would you have your children's blessings stunted because of your poor relationship with Jesus? Let it not be so. Fear the Lord and find great delight in his commands. It will surely be a blessing to your offspring.

December 25

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. (Revelation 1:7)

What will be a situation of great joy to the few who believe in the Lord and live for him will also be a situation bringing everlasting grief to the majority who live on earth. They did not choose to walk the narrow path, so they will go into eternal torment. What about you?

The Bible speaks of great tribulations coming to this earth that we live in, in the last days. Jesus said,

For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now - and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect - if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. "Immediately after the distress of those days ""the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming

on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. (Matthew 24:21-31)

Remember the words of Jesus... "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14).

Choose the right path my friend and if you have chosen the right path, walk in it faithfully till you are caught up with Jesus in the clouds.

December 26

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, (2 Corinthians 1:10)

If your hope rests in Jesus he will continually deliver you from the schemes of Satan, worldly temptations and fleshly lusts and make you an over comer. Many promises in the book of Revelation are for the "over comer".

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7)

He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it. (Revelation 2:17)

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations - (Revelation 2:26)

He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. (Revelation 3:5)

Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. (Revelation 3:12)

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. (Revelation 21:7)

Hope we all become "over comers" by the Grace of God.

December 27

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; (Psalm 103:13)

Why does the Lord have compassion on those who fear him? The reason is given in the very next verse which says,
"for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:14)"

No human being however strong or intelligent can stay alive forever. Only Enoch & Elijah according to the Word of God have been translated to heaven without dying. Scientists may not agree that we are dust, but that is a fact and the curse that Adam was given by God on sinning stated,

"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19)

Our God is a God of compassion. He told Moses,

"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6, 7)

The Apostle Paul writes to the Romans,

It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. (Romans 9:16)

Shall we then humble ourselves at the Lord's feet and give ourselves wholly to him knowing that it is only because of his compassion that we have breath and are living?

December 28

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:1-3)

Jesus here asks his disciples to place their complete trust in the Father and in him. Why should we? Some ask. For one, there is no other choice though many false choices may be seen on the horizon. And there is no one else with a better track record. He is perfect & unchanging. So put your complete trust in Him.

Peter when called by Jesus had his apprehensions at first, but when he saw the miracles performed by him, he was awe struck.

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. (Luke 5:3-11)

If you can place your trust totally on Jesus, he will do great miracles for you too. He will be with you continually and deliver you from every evil.

December 29

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." (Revelation 16:15)

Jesus said,

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (Matthew 24:36-44)

Jesus also warned his followers,

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

Are you ready for the Lord's coming? He may come in the clouds for his faithful anytime.

Live each day as if the Lord would be coming the same day. Be ready at all times. Watch and pray.

December 30

Sharon will become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for my people who seek me. (Isaiah 65:10)

Achan had sinned by taking some of the things God had forbidden in the conquest of Jericho. Subsequently, Joshua lost the fight when he tried to capture Ai, a small town. On enquiring God what the cause of his defeat was, God told him that there was sin in his camp.

Joshua with the help of God found out who the offender was.

Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today." Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has

been called the Valley of Achor ever since. (Joshua 7:24-26)

In Israel, the name Achor means trouble. The Lord promised the Israelites that a place once called the Valley of Trouble could be changed by him into a resting place for the people who sought his face continually. Are you in The Valley of Achor? God can change it into a place which gives you true rest if you seek him diligently.

Here are some promises from God for you today. He had given them to Israel long back.

"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer. "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:7-10)

December 31

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

Are you hungering and thirsting for the things of God? Or are you hungering and thirsting for the things of the world?

The Bible says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

Paul the Apostle, wrote to the Colossians, exhorting them to seek godly things,

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:1-10)

The Apostle Peter writes,

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

(2 Peter 1:3, 4)

Are you a man/woman who does the will of God? Have you set your heart on things

above? If yes, you will surely live with him forever!

365 Blessings



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