

1 February 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is my privilege to provide these devotions for you again this month. I really believe that You are going to grow as you spend time in God's Word and that is a wonderful thing.

If you know of anyone else who would use a set of these, please direct them to our web site where they can download them or take a set for them. Once I write these, we want to give them out to as many people as possible. So, thanks for your help.

God bless you as you study God's Word this month.

Gladly in His Service,
Dr. Jason

Thursday February 1

Scripture Reading: Exodus 27-28

Matthew 21:23-46

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:15 says, **You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.** Paul was warning Timothy about a man who had hurt him. I am not going to spend a lot of time on this, but there are times when we should warn others about people who are going to hurt them. This is not gossip. It is loving the ones we are trying to protect.

In our reading from Matthew, Jesus told a parable about some tenants who did not take care of what they had been given. Look at Matthew 21:43, **Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.**

You see, Jesus was not just talking about some workers in the natural. He was talking about the Jewish nation and the fact that they had not lived like they should and they hadn't produced fruit like God wanted.

This verse says that God has now taken the Kingdom from them and given it to those who will produce fruit. He has given the Kingdom to us. We need to be faithful and we need to produce fruit for Him. We do that by knowing His ways and by living for Him.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live fully for You. Help me to know when I should tell others about people who may hurt them and when it would be gossiping to speak up. I also want to be a person who produces fruit for You and the Kingdom. Please teach me about this and help me to know what my part is. I want to do all that You want with the strength and help that You supply me and not in my own strength. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday February 2

Scripture Reading: Exodus 29-30

Matthew 22:1-22

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:16 says, **At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.** Paul was admitting that some people had let him down but he was also not holding it against them. This is forgiveness in action. When people let us down, we need to forgive them and not hold it against them. Believe me, this is the right thing to do and it will help you to live free from the hurt.

I chuckle when I read times where people tried to trick Jesus. When they tried that they were way out of their league. I am talking about the time when they tried to trap Him with a question about paying taxes.

Matthew 22:15 says, **Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap Him in His words.** You can read the whole story for yourself but look at what Jesus said in verse 21, **Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."**

Jesus was not against our paying taxes but He was more interested in our giving God what He deserves. You see, there was an image on the coin of Caesar BUT we are created in God's image! So give to God what is God's. Give your life to Him.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for Your forgiveness and I want to forgive others like You want. Please help me to know if there is anyone You want to talk to me about forgiving right now and help me to forgive him or her. I also want to give You all that You deserve. Help me to yield my life to You and help me to really live that decision out today and every day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday February 3

Scripture Reading: Exodus 31-33

Matthew 22:23-46

Praise the Lord! Paul had been talking about people who had let him down but look at what he said in 2 Timothy 4:17, **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.** Oh, I hope you can hear this. People had let him down but the Lord had never let him down! Settling this in your life will help you.

When I read the Gospels, I am always impressed with Jesus. I know that might seem like a strange statement but I still mean it. He is so wonderful and I love Him more and more.

Look at what He said in Matthew 22:37-40, **Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."**

Love God and love people and you will be living like God wants! This is so simple and we are blessed to know these truths and it gets even better. When we want to live like this, Jesus will give us His love to help us!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. Please help me to know that You will never let me down and help me to love You and others like You want. I know that I can only do these things with Your help and Your love. I also ask You to bless Church tomorrow. Help us all to be there ready and willing to worship You like You deserve. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday February 4

Scripture Reading: Exodus 34-36

Matthew 23:1-22

Praise the Lord! Look at 2 Timothy 4:18, **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.** Yesterday, Paul said that God had never let him down and now he was saying that God never will let him down. Paul knew that God was faithful in the past and He would be faithful in the future!

Look at the first few verses of Matthew 23, **Then Jesus said to the crowds and to His disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them."**

Jesus was patient and kind to most people, but when it came to people like this He was also willing to point out their faults. These people could tell others how they should live but they were not willing to do what they talked about and that made them hypocrites.

We need to know God's ways and we need to live them. Then we can help others to know what we know and we can show them how they work in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, giving You my life was the best decision I have ever made. Thank You for taking care of my past and I know that You will take care of my future. Help me to know Your ways, put them into action in my life and then to be willing to share them with others. I don't ever want to make people's lives harder. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday February 5

Scripture Reading: Exodus 37-38

Matthew 23:23-39

Praise the Lord! In the final verses of 2 Timothy, Paul is greeting some people personally. Chapter 4, Verse 19 says, **Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.** This was a couple who were also in the ministry like Paul and they received a personal greeting from him.

Yesterday, I told you that Jesus was very straight forward with hypocrites. Look at Verses 23-24 from our reading for today, **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.**

Verse 33 says, **You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?** Now, I know these are pretty harsh things but Jesus was really trying to help them. They needed to know they were wrong before they would be able to accept what was right, and He was reaching out to them as well as correcting them. Look at verse 37, **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.**

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to listen to You and what You are saying to me all the time, even if You need to correct me. I know it is for my good and I want to hear You and do what You say. I also ask You to bless my Pastor today. Help him to know that we are praying for him and that we love him. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday February 6

Scripture Reading: Exodus 39-40

Matthew 24:1-22

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:20 says, **Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.** Paul is finishing up the book with some closing details. Haven't you written a letter and told about who stayed where and who had been sick? Well, that is what Paul is doing here.

The heading over Matthew 24 in my Bible says, "Signs of the End of the Age." I am sure this is accurate and I know there are surely things we can learn from this chapter. As a matter of fact, I am sure there have been things that every generation could learn from this chapter even though they didn't see the end of all things happen in their lifetimes.

Here's my point. God always wants to speak to us from His Word and we need to be looking for what He is saying. For today, look at Matthew 24:4, **Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you."**

Now, I know this is written in a chapter talking about end times, but don't you think we all need to hear what this is saying? Let's keep learning God's Word and let's base our whole lives on it. Doing that is the right thing no matter what we face in life. Psalms 119:105 says, **Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.** Let God lead You by His Word and you will walk in the light and you will be safe.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so glad that I have given my life to You. Please help me to really learn what You are teaching me from the Word and help me to put everything I learn into action in my life. I know that You always lead me in the right way and I want to stay right on track with what You have for me and my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday February 7

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 1-3

Matthew 24:23-51

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:21 says, **Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.** Paul was looking forward to a visit from Timothy and he wanted him to come as soon as possible. Paul had earlier told Timothy that he was going to be an encouragement to him and now he is saying he was looking forward to his visit.

Matthew 24:23-24 say, **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.**

We know Jesus, He is the Christ, and He lives in us! So, we need to live for Him and we will be all right. There will be false people out there but we will be safe because we know the real Jesus, we are studying His Word and we are living for Him.

When we take care of basic things like that, the rest of our lives will come in line with His will. When that is happening, we won't have anything to worry about even if we do live through the end times.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to do my best to live for You all the time. Please help me to keep learning from the Word and help me to be a good witness for You. I know that You will always lead me in the right ways and I want to be quick to follow You and Your Word. I also ask You to bless all my brothers and sisters who are doing these devotions. Help us all to grow in You and help us to represent You well all the time. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday February 8

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 4-6

Matthew 25:1-30

Praise the Lord! The last verse of 2 Timothy says, **The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.** Paul was blessing these people. Look at the two things he mentions, the Lord and grace. Believe me, we need both of these things and when we have them, we are blessed!

In the parable of the ten virgins, five of them came prepared and five didn't. When the coming of the groom took longer than expected, the ones who weren't prepared ended up missing out.

We need to live for the Lord and never quit no matter how long things take. Being in the Word consistently like you are doing is one of the ways you will be prepared for whatever happens.

In the parable of the talents, we see that we need to be faithful with what we have to do right now and then the future will take care of itself. Matthew 25:29 says, **For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.** Live for Jesus today and you will be in the group who is faithful, and in the right time He will give us more. We just need to remember that He is in control and we can trust Him no matter what.

Prayer: Lord, I thank You that You are at work in my life and I thank You for Your grace. I know that I don't deserve all Your blessings. I also know that they come because of Your love and grace. I also want to be faithful with what You have entrusted to me and I want to remember that You will always take care of me because of that same love and grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday February 9

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 7-9

Matthew 25:31-46

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:1 says **Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness.** I decided to go right on through Titus because it doesn't get covered very often. In this verse Paul points out that knowledge leads to godliness. This is exciting. As we spend time in God's Word we gain knowledge and it will lead to godliness in our lives!

When we give our lives to Jesus, it should affect every area of our lives. As Christians, we live totally different lives than people in the world. We do God's work because of His presence in our lives. We don't do those things to earn our salvation or even to pay Him back. We do those things because that is how Christians live and they are evidence that we know Him.

In our reading for today, we see that we will be rewarded for how we live as Christians. Some people are confused and think they will go to heaven because of good works but that isn't the truth. We are saved and will go to heaven because we have Jesus as our Savior. Then, because we have Him as our Savior, we do good things and we are rewarded for them. It is also true that those same good works can be a witness for Him and help others to get saved too.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I am so thankful for the work You are doing in my life. Help me to keep getting more and more knowledge from Your Word and help it to lead me to live a godly life. Then help my life to be a good witness for You. I really do want to accomplish all that You have for me to do and I want to do it all with Your strength and help. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday February 10

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 10-12

Matthew 26:1-19

Praise the Lord! Paul is talking about what knowledge will produce in our lives and in Titus 1:2, he says, **a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.** God doesn't lie. Isn't that good news? We can believe Him all the time and we can believe everything He says.

Matthew 26:6-7 say, **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.**

Jesus was free and His freedom bothered some people. In this case, Jesus was at the house of a leper and He allowed this woman to pour this perfume on Him.

Look at the reaction of the disciples in the next verse, **When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.**

When we are free, we will face people who don't like our freedom too. Jesus was free enough to be around anyone who wanted to be close to Him. He could do that because He was influencing them rather than the other way around.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so glad that I have given my life to You. Thank You for the reminder today that You never lie. Help me to believe everything You say and help me to live like You want. I also want to be free in You and I want to live my freedom out even if some people don't understand. I want to please You more than anything else. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday February 11

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 13

Matthew 26:20-54

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:3 says, **and at His appointed season He brought His Word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior.** God's timing is always right and we need to trust it.

Isn't it interesting that Jesus knew Peter was going to deny Him and yet He still kept working in Peter's life? You see, God loves us even though He knows we are not perfect. I sure hope you can let the truth of that statement sink into your life because it will help you.

Look at what Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:13, **if we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.** When we let the Lord down, He doesn't change. He still loves us and He is still faithful to us!

Most of us have been exposed to conditional love most of the time. This is where people love us when we do what they want, but God has unconditional love for us. As a matter of fact, the Word tells us that He is love!

Now, knowing all this should make us live for Him even more fully. When Peter ended up getting a greater revelation of Jesus' love it made all the difference in his life, and it will do the same for us.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to trust You with every area of my life. Please help me to trust Your timing more. I am also so thankful for Your love. Please help me to grasp it more and help me to be transformed by Your love. Bless my Church today. Help us all to be there ready and willing to worship You like You deserve. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday February 12

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 14

Matthew 26:55-75

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:4 says, **To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.** This shows that Paul wrote this book to Titus, and yet there are things for us to learn from it too. Thank God for His grace and peace. We have those things because we have Jesus in our lives. When we realize that we already have them, because of Jesus, we will realize that we don't have to ask and beg for what God has already given us.

Yesterday, I wrote to you about how much Jesus loved Peter. Today I want to remind you that He loves us all! We are reading about His arrest and we will be covering His trial and crucifixion next. He went through all those things because He loves us. He came, lived a perfect life and died on the cross for our sins because He loves us. Knowing this more will help us to be more stable just like a greater revelation of God's love helped Peter.

In the last part of our reading, we see that Peter denied the Lord just like He said he would. God really does know everything about us, He still loves us and He still died on the cross for our sins. God even knows our future. He loves us and He has chosen us to be His people.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I am so thankful for Your love. Please help me to be changed by Your love. I am also thankful for Your grace and peace. Help me to know that they are mine because You love me and You have given them to me. I also ask You to bless all my brothers and sisters with a greater revelation of Your love. Help us all to know that You have chosen us and that You never change. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday February 13

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 15-17

Matthew 27:1-31

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:5 says, **The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.** Paul had left Titus to work in the Church there and part of that work was to raise up other leaders. God wants us to grow up and come to the place where He can use us. Then He wants us to reproduce ourselves in others.

Both Peter and Judas denied the Lord but their lives sure turned out different. Judas ended up killing himself and Peter ended up being an Apostle! What was the difference? Well, Judas turned away from the Lord and kept going. Peter returned to the Lord when he realized what he had done.

I John 1:9 says, **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** We can always be forgiven if we will confess what we have done and turn to God for help. This is what Peter did and it is what Judas didn't do.

Jesus went through all the things He did because He was suffering for our sins. He paid the complete price for all the sins we will ever commit if we will turn to Him for forgiveness. He loves us so much!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and it is amazing to me to see how much You love me. Please help me to keep growing in You and help me to be ready to be used by You more. I want to accomplish all that You have for me to do and I want to help others to come to the place where they can work for You too. Help me to run to You rather than from You when I blow it and sin. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday February 14

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 18-19

Matthew 27:32-66

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:6 says, **An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.** Paul was laying out some of the characteristics a person in leadership should have. He said that a person should be able to take care of his own family first and that makes sense.

Look at some of the mocking Jesus endured in Matthew 27:41-42, **In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked Him. "He saved others," they said, "but He can't save Himself! He's the King of Israel! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him."**

Jesus couldn't save Himself because He was saving us! This was the very purpose that He came into the world for and He wasn't going to quit before it was finished.

You see, at the very beginning of His ministry, the devil came and offered Jesus a short cut but He didn't take it. Now, these religious people were offering Him another short cut and He refused it again. Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to go through anything and everything to provide salvation for us.

Prayer: Lord, I love You. Please help me to be a good influence on those You have placed in my life. I know that Your ways are always right and I want to submit to You and Your will all the time. Please help me to know that You have paid the complete price for my sins and help me to live for You. If there are areas in my life where I am not doing that, please show me and help me to get back into Your will. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday February 15

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 20-21

Matthew 28

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:7 says, **Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.** God wants those in leadership to really live the Christian life.

Matthew 28 is the account of the resurrection of Jesus and this is the most important event in history! It is the resurrection of Jesus that sets Christianity apart from all the other religions. Other men taught some things that were good and some of them even died for what they believed, but only Jesus rose from the dead!

Look at what Jesus said in verses 18-20, **Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

Jesus now wants to use us to tell others the Good News of the Gospel. We need to trust that He will always be with us and we need to do what He told us to do.

Prayer: Lord, I really do want to live for You. Please let me know what areas of my life You want to work on and help me to submit to You and Your will. I know that You are alive and that You are alive in my life. Help me to live like You want so I can be a better witness for You. I want to tell people the truth AND I want to really live those things out for others to see. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday February 16

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 22-23

Mark 1:1-22

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:8 continues to list characteristics that leaders should have. It says, **Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.** This is a list for leaders, but they are certainly things that every one of us should aspire to. Think about the phrase "love what is good." Doing that would sure help us because we go after the things we love. So, love what is good and then you will go for those very things.

The book of Mark is a wonderful book and I believe you are really going to enjoy our time in it. Look at Mark 1:21-22, **They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at His teaching, because He taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.**

One of the things you will notice about Mark is that it moves very fast. Here we are only 21 verses into the book and Jesus is already drawing crowds and teaching the people.

Notice that the people recognized that He had more authority than they had ever seen before. You see, many of the things the religious people taught were man's opinions, but Jesus was teaching the pure Word of God.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to love what is good. Help me to know how to do this and then help me to pursue those good things that I love. I also ask You to help me to speak Your Word when I have chances to do that. I know that is always the right thing to do and I want to speak things that will really help people. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday February 17

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 24-25

Mark 1:23-45

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:9 says, **He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.** I want to make the point again that this is a list for leaders, but they are also things that every one of us should do. Hold on to the trustworthy Word that you receive from God and you will do much better in life.

The last part of 1 John 3:8 tells us that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. As we go through Mark, we will be able to identify the works of the devil by seeing what Jesus destroys.

Mark 1:32-34 say, **That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was.**

Jesus healed the sick and set people free from demonic oppression. Both of these things are works of the devil and Jesus was destroying them! Hebrews 13:8 says, **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** Jesus has not changed and He is still destroying the works of the devil just like He did back then.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for the things You are teaching me from the Word. Help me to hold firmly to Your Word. I also ask You to destroy all the devil's work in my life and use me to destroy his works in other people's lives. Please bless Church tomorrow. Help us to all hear that truth and to be set free by it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday February 18

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 26-27

Mark 2

Praise the Lord! I want to give you Titus 1:9 again, **He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.** Yesterday, I wrote to you about holding on to the trustworthy things you have learned from the Word and today I want you to see why we should do that. We need to hold on to the Truth so we can help others and encourage them.

God has saved us because He loves us and so we can help other people. We need to be willing to take the blessings He has given us to others. As we read through Mark, we see Jesus doing many wonderful things. Many times crowds followed Him and He was always willing to minister to them. We need to be the same way.

In the first part of Mark 2, we see that some people even tore a roof off to get a needy man to Jesus. That is determination and we need to be that determined to help people too. When this man did get through to Jesus, He met his every need. He needed forgiveness and healing. Jesus made sure he got everything he needed. We need to tell people that Jesus can forgive them and that He can heal them. Believe me, Jesus has not changed and He is still forgiving sins and He is still healing people today.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for all the wonderful things You have done for me and I want to tell others that You will do the same things for them. Thank You for forgiving me and healing me. Help me to know that I have those blessings because You love me and help me to be bold enough to tell others that You love them and that You want to bless them too. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday February 19

Scripture Reading: Numbers 1-2

Mark 3:1-21

Praise the Lord! (Really, Praise the Lord! Right now.) I don't just write those words out to fill space. I am encouraging you to spend a little time each day praising Him! Titus 1:10 says, **For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group.** As we do good things and live for God, others will continue to rebel and they will get worse and worse. We need to keep living for God and we need to keep praising Him because it is always the right thing to do.

We have been talking about being blessed so we can be a blessing to others. That is one way to describe how Jesus lived. He was blessed and He was always blessing others.

Look at the crowds that followed Jesus. Mark 3:7 says, **Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.** Mark 3:20 says, **Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that He and His disciples were not even able to eat.**

In cases like this, Jesus would lay aside His needs and minister to the people. You see, He was blessed and He was willing to bless others. Look at what Genesis 12:2 says about Abraham, **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.** God blessed him so he could be a blessing!

Prayer: Lord, I want to keep living for You no matter what I face. I want to be blessed so I can be a greater blessing to others. Help me to have all the good things You have for me and help me to remember that I am not the only one who needs those blessings. I want to be a good receiver and a good giver! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday February 20

Scripture Reading: Numbers 3-4

Mark 3:22-35

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:11 says, **They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach - and that for the sake of dishonest gain.** This verse is talking about some people who were not Christians. They were rebellious and they were hurting people rather than helping them. We always need to be a blessing to people and then we will be living like God wants.

Look at Mark 3:31-35, **Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they told Him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You." "Who are My mother and My brothers?" He asked. Then He looked at those seated in a circle around Him and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! Whoever does God's will is My brother and sister and mother."**

Jesus said, "Whoever does God's will is My brother and sister and mother!" James 1:22 says, **Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

Finally, James 1:25 says, **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.** We need to DO the things we are learning.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for the work You are doing in my life. Please help me to really learn the things You are teaching me and help me to DO what You say. I know that DOING Your Word is what will bring Your blessing and I know that is also what will help me to be a good witness for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday February 21

Scripture Reading: Numbers 5-6

Mark 4:1-20

Praise the Lord! In Titus, Paul is still talking about wicked people. Look what he said in verse 12, **Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."** They didn't know God and we do. We should live for God and that will make our lives shine like lights in the darkness.

I am sure you know this by now, but I love all the Word, but Mark 4 is a very important chapter. It is the parable of the sower and look at what Jesus said about it in verse 13, **Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"**

When we get the truth of this parable, it will open up many other things to us, and if we don't get the truth of this one we will miss out. You see, this parable is talking about how to hold on to the truths that God gives us from the Word. If we get truth and then let the devil or circumstances steal it from us, we are no better off. When we learn how to hold on to the wonderful things God teaches us we will be blessed!

Mark 4:20 says, **Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the Word, accept it, and produce a crop – thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.** We need to be good soil. We need to hold on to the things God shows us and then we will produce for Him!

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You and I want my life to shine in the darkness of this world. Please help me to really hear the things You are teaching me and help me to hold on to them. I know that DOING what You say is part of this process. Help me to be a DOER of Your Word and not a HEARER only. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday February 22

Scripture Reading: Numbers 7

Mark 4:21-41

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:13 says, **This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith.** When Paul told Titus to rebuke these people sharply it was because he loved them and he was hoping that they would come to their senses. Paul didn't want these people to be lost and God didn't want that either.

In yesterday's devotion, we talked about how we need to hold on to the things God shows us from the Word. Doing that will help us to receive more from Him. In our reading for today, the disciples had an opportunity to put this into action and they didn't do very well.

Look at what Jesus told them in Mark 4:35, **That day when evening came, He said to His disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."** This was the same day that Jesus had told them to hold on to the Word. Now, He told them to go to the other side of the lake in a boat. He didn't tell them to go half way, get scared and die at sea!

They started off well, but when they ran into a storm they forgot the Word and panicked! In case you think I am reading too much into this story, look at what Jesus said to them in verse 40, **He said to His disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"** So, this was a test of faith and they didn't hold on to what He had said. I sure hope you do better.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to learn the things I need. Please continue to speak to me from the Word and help me to really hold on to the things You show me. I don't want to let You down and I am so thankful for Your patience when I do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday February 23

Scripture Reading: Numbers 8-10

Mark 5:1-20

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:14 says, **and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.** We need to pay attention to the Word and we need to obey Jesus and that same Word. When we do those things, we will be living like He wants and we will have His blessing on our lives.

When we started the book of Mark, I reminded you that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and I told you to be watching for that to happen. We sure have a clear case of that in our reading for today.

In Mark 5, there was a man who was demon possessed and Jesus set him completely free! Now, jump down to the end of the story and look at verses 18-20, **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.**

This man wanted to go with Jesus but Jesus sent him right out to be a witness. Some people would think this was way too soon but Jesus knew it wasn't. You see, there is power in a personal testimony. Let Jesus set you free and then tell others what He has done for you. The time is now!

Prayer: Lord, I want to know Your Word and I want to obey You all the time. Please set me free from all the works of the devil and help me to boldly tell others about the wonderful things You have done for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday February 24

Scripture Reading: Numbers 11-13

Mark 5:21-43

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:15 says, **To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.** I want to encourage you to take some time today and meditate on this verse because it is very important. When we serve God, our hearts will be pure and that makes us free!

Jesus continues to destroy the devil's work. In our reading for today, He healed a woman and He raised a little girl from the dead. While He healed the woman, the little girl died and look at what Jesus said to her father in verses 35-36, **While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?" Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."**

Jesus told the father to ignore the bad report and keep holding on to what He had said. Does this remind you of the parable of the sower? This father needed to hold on to the Word even though things were getting worse. Well, the father was good soil because he did hold on to the Word and it produced life! Being good soil and holding on to the Word is a huge part in how we need to live for Jesus and doing those things will always produce life for us.

Prayer: Lord, I want You to rule and reign in my life more. I want to be good soil. I want to hold on to everything You speak to me and I don't ever want to give up. Please help me to really meditate on the things You are saying and help me to live like You want. I want all the life and life in abundance You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday February 25

Scripture Reading: Numbers 14-15

Mark 6:1-32

Praise the Lord! Titus 1:16 continues to talk about people who didn't know God and it says, **They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.** Here's the point I want you to get from this today: It is one thing to *say* we know God, but how we *live* will show the real truth.

There is a very interesting statement made in Mark 6:5-6. They say, **He could not do any miracles there, except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them. And He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.**

We have seen other times when Jesus said people were healed because of their faith and now these people missed out because of their lack of faith. I sure know which group I want to be in. How about you?

Right after this, Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the Good News and look at how things worked out at the next place Jesus went. Mark 6:12-13, **They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.** Now we know it was the first people's lack of faith that was the problem because God was still more than willing to heal.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am thankful that I have given my life to You. I want to live my life in a way that backs up the things I say I believe. Help me to be a person who knows about faith AND help me to really live by faith so others can learn from the example my life sets. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday February 26

Scripture Reading: Numbers 16-17

Mark 6:33-56

Praise the Lord! Titus 2:1 says, **You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.** We need to base everything we teach on the Word of God. When you find a person who teaches that way, you can trust them and follow the Word that they teach. You also need to do the same thing when you have chances to share. Basing everything on the Word will keep you on track.

In our reading for today, Jesus taught a huge crowd of people. Then He fed them. He did these things because He loved them.

Next, He got into a boat and crossed a lake. When He arrived there, another huge crowd showed up. Look at what verses 53-56 say, **When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. And wherever He went - into villages, towns or countryside - they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed.** Jesus was always meeting the needs of others because He loved them. He will also meet your needs today because He loves you.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for Your love toward me. Help me to base my whole life on Your Word and help me to know that You will always take care of me. I also want to point people to You when I have a chance to influence them. Help me to have Your blessings on my life and help me to let them shine for others to see. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday February 27

Scripture Reading: Numbers 18-21

Mark 7

Praise the Lord! Paul is giving some practical advice for people in Titus 2. Verse 2 says, **Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.** There never comes a time in our lives when we can put living for God on hold. Older men need to live for Him and let others learn from their example.

Look at what Jesus said about a group of people in Mark 7:6-8, **He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."**

They were holding up the traditions and teachings of men higher than the Word of God. Because they were doing those things, they were off track in every other way. Jesus said that even their worship was in vain!

Look at what Jesus said in verse 13, **Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.**" They made the Word invalid in their lives!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to keep Your Word valid in my life. Please help me to know if there are any areas where I have accepted the teachings and traditions of man that contradict Your Word. I know that Your Word is always right and I want to live by it. Please help me to know the truth that will really set me free. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday February 28

Scripture Reading: Numbers 22-25

Mark 8:1-21

Praise the Lord! In Titus 2:2, Paul talked to older men and in verse 3, he talked to older women, **Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.** No matter how old or young we are, we need to live for God and let our light shine. As we do those things, we will be good examples for others to follow.

In the first section of Mark 8, Jesus again feeds a huge crowd of people. There is no doubt that this was a major miracle, and yet look at what some people asked right after this. Mark 8:11 says, **The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test Him, they asked Him for a sign from heaven.** Jesus was giving them all kinds of signs but they would not believe them.

You see, they didn't really want to know the truth and so they could reject any evidence that others could clearly see. We need to be those who are ready and willing to receive truth from Jesus and then we will see it all the time.

Haven't you seen God work in mighty ways and yet others just discount what You have seen? Many times Jesus would say, "Let those who have ears to hear, hear!" When people don't want to see or hear the truth, they will choose to miss the truth and they will.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You all the days of my life. Help me to represent You well and help me to always have ears to hear and eyes to see what You are doing. I don't ever want to miss out on anything that You are doing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.