

1 January 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are so blessed to have another year to live for Jesus. Being in His Word is an important thing and I am glad you have taken a set of these devotions to help you. If you will do the Scripture Readings as I have laid them out, you will read the whole Bible this year.

If you know of anyone else who would use these, please take a set for them or direct them to our web site where they can download them.

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

Gladly in His Service,

Dr. Jason B. Brittain

Monday January 1

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1-2

Matthew 1

Praise the Lord! I am going to continue spending a little time each day in 2 Timothy until we finish it. 2 Timothy 3:1 says, **But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.** We can sure see terrible times all around us and that makes me want to stay close to Jesus and it makes me want to keep learning from His Word. The Word can be a sure anchor for our souls.

In Matthew 1, we start reading about the birth of Jesus. It was accompanied by many miracles and I am sure we will talk about some of them, but for today I want to emphasize Joseph's obedience.

Matthew 1:20 says, **But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."**

When God revealed His will to Joseph, he was willing to do exactly what God wanted. Because of his willingness to obey God, he saw many miraculous things. It will be the same way for us. We need to hear from God, obey Him and then hang on. Who knows what we will be involved in, but we know it will be good because God is good and He only has good things for us.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to stay close to You all the time. Please help me to really learn Your ways and help me to obey You all the time. I know that I can trust You and I want to commit today and this whole year to You. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday January 2

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3-5

Matthew 2

Praise the Lord! Paul is describing people in the end times and 2 Timothy 3:2 says, **People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy.** If this is how people in the world are living, we can know that our lives should be totally different. So, don't just read about these people, learn from lists like this and then live like God wants.

Since I wrote to you about Joseph's obedience yesterday, let me give you a little more for today. Matthew 2:19-21 say, **After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So he got up, took the child and His mother and went to the land of Israel.**

God said GO and Joseph went. Have there been times in your life when you felt like the Lord was instructing you to go somewhere? Now, I know it probably wasn't anything as major as what God asked Joseph to do, but we still need to obey Him. When we are in the habit of obeying Him in little things we will be ready for more. So, hear from God and do what He says. That really is the best way to live.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. Please help me to live like You want and help me to shine as a light in the darkness of this world. I know that obeying You is always the right thing and I want to live that way more consistently. Speak Lord, help me to hear and help me to obey You quickly and completely. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday January 3

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6-8

Matthew 3

Praise the Lord! Here are some more things Paul said describe those who live in the end of time, **without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good.** Again, I want to make the point that we should be totally different than these people. Here's an example of what I mean: These worldly people do not love good things. We should be good and we should love good things all the time! That is being light in a dark world.

Matthew 3 talks about John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for Jesus. Look at what John said in verses 11-12, **"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come One who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

John realized and acknowledged that Jesus was greater than he was and he knew that Jesus was going to bring purity to His people. Don't ever forget that Jesus wants you to live a pure life. He wants to burn up anything that is impure and He wants you to represent Him as a holy person. Those things are part of Him baptizing you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I really do want to live for You. Please help me to learn Your ways and help me to really live them out. I don't want to live like the world or even just a little bit better than they do. I want to live holy and pure like You want. Please help me in all this. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday January 4

Scripture Reading: Genesis 9-11

Matthew 4

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy 3:4 Paul continues to talk about worldly people and he says they are, **treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.** We should love God more than anything else and we should want to please Him! When we live like that, He will bless us. Matthew 6:33 says, **But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Let me make a point from the temptation of Jesus. Specifically, look at the last temptation in verses 8-9, **Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give You," he said, "if You will bow down and worship me."** Satan wanted Jesus to worship him.

Now, keep that in mind and look at Jesus' response in verse 10, **Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"** Jesus said that He would only worship God and He would only SERVE GOD! Did you notice that Jesus added something to what the devil had said? Here's my point; Jesus knew that we will serve the one we worship. So, we need to be sure to worship God and Him alone. Then we will automatically live for Him and serve Him.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I am so thankful for the opportunity to study Your Word. I know that I can learn Your ways and that I can live for You with Your help. Please help me to really learn that things You are teaching me. Help me to worship You more and then help me to live like a true worshipper should live. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday January 5

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12-14

Matthew 5:1-26

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy 3:5, Paul tells us about worldly people and he says they, **have a form of godliness but deny its power. Have nothing to do with them.** Does this advice to have nothing to do with them seem harsh? Well, until they quit rejecting God there really isn't much hope for them and being around them too much might hurt us and our faith.

Matthew 5:14, says. **You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.** Isn't that an amazing statement? Well, it was Jesus who made it and so we know it is true. How can we show forth the light like Jesus wants?

Verse 16 says, **In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven.** When we know good things that need to be done, and we do them, we are letting our light shine. This is important because Jesus said people would see these things and give praise to our Father in Heaven.

I know you want to live your life in a way that will bring others to God and this makes it so simple. Find good things and do them. I know this sounds too simple to be true, but it is part of God's plan for your life and He will use what You do for His glory.

Prayer: Lord, I want to obey You all the time. Please help me to know if there are people in my life that I am spending too much time with and then help me to do what You say. I also ask You to show me good works that I can do for You. I really do want to be a good witness for You and I want others to come to know You and Your goodness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday January 6

Scripture Reading: Genesis 15-17

Matthew 5:27-48

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 3:6 says, **They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires.** Paul is still talking about worldly people who don't know God. We should be influencing people for good and not evil. These people do the exact opposite.

Jesus wants to be Lord of your life! He isn't interested in being anything other than Number One. When we make Him Lord, He wants to rule and reign over every area of our lives.

In our reading for today, we see that Jesus wants to rule over everything we do and He wants to go beyond that. He even wants to rule over the way we think.

Matthew 5:43-44 say, **You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.**

God doesn't want you killing people, but He wants more than that. If we love people rather than hate them and if we pray for them rather than cursing them, then murder won't be a problem. So, let Jesus rule over every part of your life and you will end up living like He wants.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I know that You have my best interest in mind. Please help me to make You Lord over every area of my life and then help me to live and think like You want. I want to live for You and I want to influence people for good and not for evil. I also ask You to bless Church tomorrow. Help us all to be there worshiping You and building each other up. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday January 7

Scripture Reading: Genesis 18-19

Matthew 6

Praise the Lord! Listen to what Paul says about worldly people in 2 Timothy 3:7. He says they are **always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth**. You see, just getting knowledge is not enough. You have to get the right knowledge and you have to let it affect your life. We need to be those who are seeking God's Truth and then we need to let what we learn determine how we live.

Look at Matthew 6:2, "**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.**" WHEN YOU GIVE! Jesus assumed we would be givers and He wants us to give with the right attitude.

Matthew 6:5 says, **And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.** WHEN YOU PRAY! Jesus assumed we would be prayers and He wants us to pray with the right attitude.

Matthew 6:16 says, **When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.** WHEN YOU FAST! Jesus assumed we would be fasters and He wants us to fast with the right attitude.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I really want to live for You. Please help me to give, to pray and to fast like You want! I know that everything You ask me to do is good for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday January 8

Scripture Reading: Genesis 20-22

Matthew 7

Praise the Lord! Paul is continuing to talk about worldly people and in 2 Timothy 3:8 he talks about two specific people and he says, **Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth - men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.** These people opposed the truth and that led them to be rejected. I sure want to accept the truth and that will lead me to be accepted by God.

What you sow is what you will reap. This is a law and it works in every area of your life. Look at Mathew 7:1-2, **Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.**

Oh, I know that some people only apply this law to the giving and receiving of money, and it does apply there. As you give \$, you will receive \$, but it also applies to other areas of life.

Jesus is saying that we should sow forgiveness and mercy to others. Guess what we will reap? We will reap just what we sow. If we make the wrong decision to sow judgment, we will reap judgment. If we sow forgiveness and mercy, we will reap forgiveness and mercy.

Prayer: Lord, I want to embrace Your truth and Your ways. Please help me to really learn Your ways and help me to live them. I also ask You to help me to sow good things. Please stop me when I am sowing anything that I would not want a harvest from and help me to sow good things instead. I want to have a harvest coming that I will rejoice over when it comes. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday January 9

Scripture Reading: Genesis 23-24

Matthew 8

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy 3:9, Paul describes some people who had been sowing bad things and he says, **But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.** They were not going to get very far because what they had been doing was going to be evident to everyone. Sow good things and you will have a good harvest. Sow bad things and you will have a bad harvest and everyone is going to see it happen.

In the first part of Matthew 8, Jesus answers a really important question. Matthew 8:1-2 say, **When He came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed Him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."**

This man was asking a really good question. He knew that Jesus was able to heal him, but he wasn't sure if Jesus was willing. Look at what Jesus said in the next verse, **Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.** Jesus was not only able to heal him. He was also willing. Know this: God is able and willing to heal you.

1 Peter 2:24 says, **He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.** Jesus died on the cross so you could be healed!

Prayer: Lord, I want my life to be based on Your Truth. Please help me to know Your ways and help me to live like You want. I also want to have all the healing that You have provided for me and I want to make sure everyone around me knows that it was You who healed me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday January 10

Scripture Reading: Genesis 25-26

Matthew 9:1-17

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 3:10 says, **You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance.** Paul not only preached the truth, he lived it and he had endurance. We need to know the truth, live it and keep living it no matter what we face. Some people who will not accept what we say will be won over when they see us really living it.

In the first part of Matthew 9, Jesus ministered to a man who was a paralytic. Jesus forgave his sins and healed his body. You see, most people would have only seen the man's need for physical healing, but Jesus knew he needed more.

Psalms 103:3 says, **Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.** This is talking about God and it says that He forgives ALL our sins and He heals ALL our diseases.

In Matthew 9, Jesus was putting the truth of this verse into action. Aren't you glad we have the Gospels to study? Well, let me remind you that Hebrews 13:8 says, **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** Jesus was a forgiver and a healer back then and He hasn't changed! He is the same today. We can go to Him and get our sins forgiven and our sicknesses healed!

Prayer: Lord, I want to be like Paul. I want to know the right things AND I want to live them. I am also so thankful that You never change. Help me to read the Gospels and know that You are the same today as You were back then. Help me to run to You for forgiveness and healing when I need them. I also ask You to bless those You have brought into my life to teach the Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday January 11

Scripture Reading: Genesis 27-28

Matthew 9:18-38

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy 3:11, Paul is listing some of the things he had been through, **persecutions, sufferings - what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.** He had sure been through some hard things, but his testimony was that God had rescued him from them all! Praise the Lord. Aren't you glad that God is still rescuing people like you and me today?

While I am writing the devotions for this month, I am also designing some covers for teachings that I have done in the past. I just designed the ones for a series I did on faith. Look at what Jesus said about faith in verses 22 & 29: Verse 22 says, **Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," He said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.** Verse 29 says, **Then He touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you."**

In that series I point out that we already have faith if we are saved and now what we need is to learn about what we have. Ask God to teach you about faith and then really listen to what He shows you. Take some time and meditate on these verses. You were saved by faith and now you need to live by faith. It is that important.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I thank You for every time You have rescued me. Please help me to have faith that You will always be with me and that You will take care of my future just like You have my past. I also ask You to teach me more about faith. I want to live by faith and I know that is pleasing to You. I also ask You to bless my brothers and sisters who are in jail doing these devotions. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday January 12

Scripture Reading: Genesis 29-30

Matthew 10:1-23

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 3:12 says, **In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.** This might not seem like good news to you but it is still the truth. You see, there are some people who choose darkness rather than the light and they will often persecute those who choose the light. So, just know that this might happen and keep living for Jesus no matter what you face.

God wants to use us in His work. In our reading from Matthew 10, we see Jesus sending out the twelve. Verses 7-8 say, **As you go, preach this message: "The Kingdom of Heaven is near. " Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.**

Jesus sent them out and He told them what to do. He wanted them to continue to do the very things He had been doing. 1 John 3:8 tells us that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and now He was sending out His disciples to do the same things.

He came to destroy the works of the devil, He wanted the disciples in Matthew 10 to destroy the works of the devil, and He wants us to destroy the works of the devil!

All that is good news and it gets even better. He even gives us His power and His authority to do those things!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live for You no matter what anyone thinks. I want to please You more than anyone else. Please help me to be used in Your work more and help me to do it all with the strength and authority that You supply. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday January 13

Scripture Reading: Genesis 31-32

Matthew 10:24-42

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 3:12-13 say, **In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.** As we live for God and keep growing in Him, there will be others who just keep getting worse. We just need to stay on track. Keep loving Jesus and living for Him no matter what others do.

God cares for you! I know that is a simple statement, but if we could all get a greater revelation of it we would do better. Look at Matthew 10:29-31, **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.**

I am sure you have all seen sparrows flying around. We sometimes even get upset with them for the mess they make. These verses tell us that God notices every time one of them falls to the ground. That is how caring God is and He loves us more than He loves the sparrows. This simple truth should help us to love Him and to trust Him with every detail of our lives.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I am sorry for the times I don't live like You want. Please help me to run to You when I need help. I know that Your ways are better than my ways and I want to choose You and Your ways all the time. Help me to live for You no matter what I face and help me to know that You care for me and that You are looking out for me. I want a greater revelation of Your love. Please bless Church tomorrow. Help us all to be there on time ready to worship You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday January 14

Scripture Reading: Genesis 33-35
Matthew 11

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 3:14 says, **But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.** We need to learn God's ways, put them into practice and then CONTINUE IN WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED. Doing those things will keep us on track and they will keep us heading forward.

Look at the last verses of Matthew 11, **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.**

This is a wonderful invitation to every one of us to come to Jesus when we are weary and burdened. We should take Him at His Word and we should act on this invitation.

There is one phrase in the middle of this that I want to comment on for today. Jesus invites us to Learn from Him in this whole process. You see, it is good to come to Him when we are overwhelmed but it is even better to live free from those things in the first place. The last part of these verses says, For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. He can teach us how to live like that and it is far better.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for all the things You are teaching me from the Word. Please help me to really learn and help me to put it all into action in my life. Then help me to CONTINUE in those things. I also ask You to teach me more about how I can live being yoked to You. I want to have all the good things You have for me so I will be able to show others how wonderful You are. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday January 15

Scripture Reading: Genesis 36-37

Matthew 12:1-21

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 3:15 says, **and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** Paul was reminding Timothy that he had been taught the ways of God all of his life. Let's use the influence we have on the next generation to help them to know about how wonderful Jesus is and how much He loves us.

The first part of Colossians 1:15 says this about Jesus, **He is the image of the invisible God.** Jesus came to reveal the Father and His will to mankind. Now, this is good news, but there were some people more interested in maintaining man's opinion of God rather than learning what He was really like. So, when Jesus came and showed them something about God that they didn't want to accept, they rejected Him and His message.

We see that happening in the first part of our reading for today. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. He knew that God is always willing to heal people, but some of the religious people got all upset because they didn't think Jesus should have done that on the Sabbath.

Here's my point for today and we will develop it more as we go along. People who are in bondage and who don't want to change can sometimes get upset with people who are free.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to help others to love You too. Help me to influence those I know to love You and to live for You. I also want to walk in all the freedom You have and I want to learn more about You as we look at the life of Jesus. Please help me to be set free from all religious bondages in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday January 16

Scripture Reading: Genesis 38-40

Matthew 12:22-50

Praise the Lord 2 Timothy 3:16 is a wonderful verse and it says, **All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.** This is why we study ALL of God's Scripture. If you will do the Scripture Readings I have put on here for you every day, you will read ALL of God's Word each year.

There is a really interesting story at the end of our reading for today. Matthew 12:46-50 say, **While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to Him. Someone told Him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to You." He replied to him, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?" Pointing to His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My brother and sister and mother."**

Are you doing God's will? If so, then Jesus said you are His close relative. It doesn't matter what family we were born into in the natural. It matters that we are in His family. When we give our lives to Him, He takes them and wants us to live for Him. Believe me, that is the very best life there is and we are blessed to be in His family.

Prayer: Lord, I thank You for Your Word and I ask You to continue to speak to me from it. Please help me to know how I should be living and help me to represent You well. I am so thankful that I have been adopted into Your family. I want to know Your will and I want to do it. I also pray that You will use me to reach others for You. I love You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday January 17

Scripture Reading: Genesis 41

Matthew 13:1-32

Praise the Lord! Paul was talking about the Word in 2 Timothy 3 and in verse 17, he says, **so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.** We are equipped for everything God wants us to do through His Word. As we spend time in His Word, every day, we will be ready for whatever He wants us to do. This is why I am so excited about your doing these devotions. You are doing your part and God will do His part.

Jesus said that the Parable of the Sower is a key Parable. When we really get its message, many others things will be opened up to us.

Look at what He said in Matthew 13:23, **But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the Word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.**

The seed is the Word. Some people hear the Word and then lose it, but those who hang on to the Word are the ones who have the truth of this Parable. When we learn that we need to hold on to the things God shows us from the Word, we will be like the good soil talked about here. So, hear from God's Word, accept its truths and then don't ever let go of what He has said. Doing this in one area of your life will help you to do it in other areas and that is why this is so important.

Prayer: Lord, I do want to be equipped for everything that You want to do in my life. Help me to hold on to the things You show me from the Word and help me to be like good soil. I want Your Word to produce more in my life and I am so glad You have shown me this today. Help me to hold on to this truth! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday January 18

Scripture Reading: Genesis 42-43

Matthew 13:33-58

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:1 says, **In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His Kingdom, I give you this charge:** Paul reminded Timothy, and us, that there is a day coming when all people will be judged. When we have accepted Jesus into our lives, we will be judged not guilty because He paid the price for our sins!

Earlier we talked about faith and I showed you several people who received what they wanted from Jesus because of their faith. Now, look at what Matthew 13:58 says, **And He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.**

I am sure you already know this but this is talking about Jesus! The same Jesus who healed before when people came to Him in faith didn't do many miracles here because of their lack of faith.

Romans 12:3 says, **For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.** If you are saved, God has given you the measure of faith. That is how you were saved and that is the same faith you need to use to receive what You need from Him.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I love Your Word. Please help me to know more about the measure of faith that You have given me and help me to use it more. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me and I want to be in the group of people who come to You in faith often and who receive Your blessings consistently. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday January 19

Scripture Reading: Genesis 44-45

Matthew 14:1-21

Praise the Lord! This is the charge Paul gave Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, **Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction.** The only way a person can do these things is by being training the Word ahead of time. As we continue to study the Word, we will be equipped to be used by Him more. So, you are on the right track. Keep going.

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin and the closest thing He had to a peer in the work of the ministry. In the first part of Matthew 14, we read that a wicked king, Herod, had John killed. Look at verse 13, **When Jesus heard what had happened, He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed Him on foot from the towns.** Jesus was trying to get away so He could pray and spend time with God but all these people followed Him. So, Jesus healed them, taught them the Word and fed them physically!

Jesus realized that it was the devil who was behind the death of John and so Jesus was striking back at him. Jesus was actively destroying the devil's work in these people. Let me make two quick points. First, we need to realize that our real enemy is the devil. Secondly, we need to be like Jesus and destroy his work in others' lives.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to be equipped by Your Word to do all of Your work that You have for me to do. I also ask You to help me to remember who my real enemy is and help me to do damage to him and his work as often as I can. I love You so much and I want to live for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday January 20

Scripture Reading: Genesis 46-48

Matthew 14:22-36

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:3 says, **For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.** There are lots of people around today who only want to hear what feels good. God's Word does have many wonderful promises in it and yet we need it all. Allow God to speak whatever He wants to You and He will keep you on track.

After Jesus had healed, taught and fed the people in the verses we covered yesterday, He sent the disciples off to cross a lake and He went off to pray. Finally, He was going to get some time with the Lord.

Well, the disciples found themselves in a huge storm and Jesus had to go rescue them. If you get the picture that Jesus was always willing to meet other people's needs, you are getting an accurate picture. Jesus loves people (including you and me) and He is always willing to help us.

Look at the last two verses of our reading for today, **And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to Him and begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed.**

Prayer: Lord, I want to know Your truth! If I have to change because of it, I am willing. Please teach me Your ways. I also am so thankful for the reminder today that You are never too busy to help me. Help me to run to You in faith when I have needs. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday January 21

Scripture Reading: Genesis 49-50

Matthew 15:1-20

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:4 says, **They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.** This is talking about people who don't know God and who are consistently rejecting His truth. They turn to myths. We turn to God and His Word so we will know the truth and the truth will set us free.

I sure hope you are going to be in Church today and I hope you are a blessing there. In Matthew 15, Jesus talked to some people who were very religious but they were not Godly. They had lifted up teachings and rules of men above the Word.

Matthew 15:7-9 say, **You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "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."**

We need to base everything on the Word. If you ever have to make a choice between doing things God's way or the way it has always been done, do it God's way. Now don't get the idea that Jesus didn't love these people too. He did love them and that was why He was telling them about their mistake and challenging them to change.

Prayer: Lord, I want to base my life on Your Word and not on myths. Please help me to know the difference and help me to choose You and Your ways. I am also thankful for Your consistent love toward me. Help me to be a blessing in my Church today and at all times. I know that You have placed me there and I want to be a blessing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday January 22

Scripture Reading: Exodus 1-3

Matthew 15:21-39

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:5 says, **But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.** If we would all do the work that God wants us to do, everyone would be blessed. Trust God to plan the whole deal out, do your part, and pray for others.

Several times I have pointed out how faith helped some people to receive from God. Matthew 15:28 says, **Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.** When we have a need, we can take it to Jesus in faith just like this.

Look at verses 29-30, **Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then He went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to Him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at His feet; and He healed them.**

These people obviously came to Jesus in faith, too, and they received what they needed. Look at Hebrews 11:6, **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.** Believe these things (that is faith) and act on them (that is faith) and you will be rewarded.

Prayer: Lord, I want to know what my part is in Your work and I want to do it with Your help. I also see how important faith is and I ask You to teach me more. I know that You have given me the measure of faith to be saved and I want to use it more. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday January 23

Scripture Reading: Exodus 4-6

Matthew 16

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:6 says, **For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for My departure.** Paul was living for the Lord and he was willing to die for Him if that was God's will. In another place he said it was better to go be with the Lord, but he still had work to do so he was going to stay. No matter what we face, we need to do it all for the Lord!

Look at Matthew 16:18, **And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.** This is a wonderful truth and we all need to remember that the Church is Jesus' Church and He is the One who will build it. Everyone really needs to remember this and that includes Pastors!

The next verse says, **I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in Heaven.** God has given us power and authority. We can bind and we can loose. I have some teachings on this that have helped a lot of people. I teach that we should bind ourselves to good things and loose the works of the devil from our lives. For instance, I bind my mind to the mind of Christ and I loose all the lies and deceptions of the devil from me. (Those teachings are available if you want them.)

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live for You no matter what I face. Thank You for reminding me that the Church belongs to You and You are the One building it. Help me to know more about the keys of the Kingdom that You have given me and help me to use them like You want. I want all the victories that You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday January 24

Scripture Reading: Exodus 7-8

Matthew 17

Praise the Lord! I hope you are enjoying the little time we are spending in 2 Timothy each day. 2 Timothy 4:7 says, **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.** Paul had lived for Jesus and accomplished the things God had for him do. That is the way I want to go, and since I know He still has a lot more for me to do I know I am not done yet.

At the end of Matthew 17, there is a wonderful story that shows how God can provide for His people. Peter was all worried about the temple tax and he told the collectors that Jesus was going to pay it.

When Peter came to Jesus, He basically showed Peter that He didn't owe it but said that He was willing to pay it anyway. Then Jesus told Peter to go fishing and the fish that he caught would have the money for the tax in his mouth and it happened just like Jesus said it would.

Here's my point. God is always able to take care of us. We just need to bring our needs to Him and trust Him. We need to have faith that He will meet our needs and then watch Him do it. That is living by faith and that is exactly how God wants us to live.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live fully for You. I want to do all that You have for me to do and I know that will happen as I take care of today. I also want to keep my trust and confidence in You. You know everything I am going through and You are going to take care of me. Help me to remember that and help me to live with all the confidence that You can give me. I know that living by faith is what You want. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday January 25

Scripture Reading: Exodus 9-10

Matthew 18:1-20

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:8 says, **Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.** Paul had lived for the Lord and he had rewards coming. As we live for Him, our future will be secure too.

A couple of days ago, I wrote to you about binding and loosing prayers. Jesus covers this same subject today with some more added. Matthew 18:18-20 say, **I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in Heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on Earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in Heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.**

When I preached on these verses, I called the sermon, "Binding and Loosing Multiplied!" Individually we have power and authority to bind our lives to good things and to loose bad things from us AND there is even more power and authority when we come into agreement with others. I know this way of praying might be different than what you have heard before and I again want to remind you that my teachings on this subject are available on cd's if you want to order them.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You are my Lord and Savior now and that living for You is how I can be sure that my future is safe and secure. Help me to know what You want me to do today and help me to do it with the strength that You supply. I also ask You to teach me more about binding and loosing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday January 26

Scripture Reading: Exodus 11-12

Matthew 18:21-35

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:9 says, **Do your best to come to me quickly.** Paul was wanting to see Timothy so he could be encouraged. Whenever I read the phrase "Do your best. . ." I think of 2 Timothy 2:15 that says, **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.**

All of our New Testament Reading for today is on forgiveness! Please read everything Jesus had to say about it and take it to heart. We need to forgive others just like God has forgiven us.

At the end of the Parable, Jesus summed it all up in verse 35, **This is how My Heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.** If we don't forgive others, it will block us from receiving forgiveness from God.

Some people would hear this and say, "Yeah, but how much to I have to forgive?" Well, I am glad you asked that. Look at Ephesians 4:32, **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** We are supposed to forgive others just like God forgave us and that means every thing and every time.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to do my best to live for You. Please help me to know if there are people who I have not forgiven and help me to forgive them with Your help. I know that Your forgiveness toward me is enough to help me to forgive others and I want to submit to Your ways in my life. Please help me. I know I can't do all this without You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday January 27

Scripture Reading: Exodus 13-15

Matthew 19:1-15

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:9-10 say, **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.** It hurts when someone deserts you and Paul wanted to be with someone who was stable. Please be that stable person to those who minister to you. They need it!

Look at Matthew 19:1-3, **When Jesus had finished saying these things, He left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there. Some Pharisees came to Him to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"**

I find looking at the reaction of these Pharisees fascinating. Here was Jesus healing people and they only wanted to test Him! You would think they would be wanting to know more about Him and His message. They were seeing the very power of God on display and all they wanted to do was argue about divorce.

Later we see that the disciples thought Jesus was too busy to bless little children. So, they weren't doing much better.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to be a blessing to Your people. Please help me to stand by people when they need it. I also ask You to help me to know that You are good and that You only do good things. So, I am not going to get distracted by anything. I am going to stay close to You and accept everything You do in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday January 28

Scripture Reading: Exodus 16-18

Matthew 19:16-30

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:11 says, **Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.** Paul did have some people standing with him and Luke was one of those people. It is also interesting that Paul wanted Mark to be brought to him. Earlier, Paul had rejected Mark from a missions trip and yet he was ready to give him another chance now. I am glad Paul walked in forgiveness.

The rich young ruler did not miss out because he was rich. He missed out because he trusted in his riches too much. He could not trust God because all of his trust was in his wealth.

Any time we make anything more important than God, we are in trouble. If the rich young ruler had done what Jesus challenged him to do, he would have been blessed both in this life and eternally. Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 19:29, **And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.**

If he had given up all his riches and trusted Jesus, he would have received much more in this life and he would have inherited eternal life!

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You. I want to be faithful to You and to other Christians. I know that all this is Your will for my life and I know that Your will is good for me. I also ask You to help me to keep You number one in my life. I don't want anything else to become too important to me and if it does I ask You to challenge me to get my priorities back in order. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday January 29

Scripture Reading: Exodus 19-21

Matthew 20:1-16

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:12 says, **I sent Tychicus to Ephesus**. This might seem like a strange verse for me to try to write about but I have been taking them in order so here goes. Paul had a lot of work to be done and he was using other Christians. In this case, he had a faithful man named Tychicus and he was able to send him to Ephesus. When we are faithful, we will be of more use to God and to people who can send us in their place.

It is kind of nice the way we are going through Matthew. On days like this, we have only one Parable to talk about and that is good. The Parable of the workers in the vineyard is a Parable about getting to Heaven.

In this story, some people worked for the Lord a long time and others a medium amount of time and others worked only a little time, but they all received the same reward.

Here's how this applies to Heaven. I have been saved about 38 years and I have tried to live for the Lord. I haven't been perfect but I have done some work for Him along the way. If someone else gets saved 38 minutes before they die, they are going to go the same Heaven as me! We will end up in the same place! Now, don't misunderstand. I would have rather lived for the Lord rather than living unsaved, and waiting can be disastrous because someone might die before they turn their life over to Him.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live for You. I thank You for the promise of Heaven and I hope many other people go. I want to be faithful for my whole life before I get there and I want to help others to know You even if it is in the last moments of their life here. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday January 30

Scripture Reading: Exodus 22-24

Matthew 20:17-34

Praise the Lord! In 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul was asking for some things to be brought to him, **When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.** The parchments were probably parts of the Word that he had. I know I always want the Word with me everywhere I go.

Have you ever really needed something from the Lord? When we are in those situations, we need to draw near to Him in faith and not let anything stop us.

In our reading we see two men like that. Verses 29-30 say, **As Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"**

Some people tried to stop them, but they would not quit because they had faith and they really needed Jesus' help. **The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"** They received what they needed because of their faith and their persistence.

Draw near to God in faith and don't ever quit!

Prayer: Lord, I love Your Word and I am so thankful that I can freely study it as much as I want. I want to really learn Your ways and I want live for You. Help me to draw near to You in faith when I have needs and help me to have the kind of persistence that never gives up. I know that You can meet my needs and I want to seek You first in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday January 31

Scripture Reading: Exodus 25-26

Matthew 21:1-22

Praise the Lord! 2 Timothy 4:14 says, **Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.** Paul was a wise man. He was willing to let the Lord take care of this person who had done him harm. We would all do better if we would have this same attitude. Trust God to take care of the situations where you are hurt. He knows everything and He is always right, just and fair.

Jesus was heading to Jerusalem. He knew that He was going to give His life on the cross for the sins of mankind. As He entered, many came out and worshipped Him.

When Jesus went into the temple area, he cleansed it of the corruption that was there. Verses 12-13 say, **Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," He said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"**

God wanted His temple to be a place to meet with His people but men were using the temple for all kinds of other things. We are now the temple of God and we need to use our lives for the things He wants.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to live just like You want. If there are things that need to be cleansed out of my life, I ask You to do it and I trust that it will all be done for my benefit. I also want to thank You for all the things You have shown me this month and I am looking forward to being in Your Word next month. In Jesus' Name, Amen.