

1 July 2007

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

I am so glad that you have gotten a set of these devotions for this month. Being diligent in our studies will pay off in many ways and I am glad to be able to help you. If you know of anyone else who would use a set of these, please get some to them or let them know that they can download them off our website.

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

Gladly in His Service,

Dr. Jason B. Brittain

Sunday July 1

Scripture Reading: Job 21-22
Acts 10:1-23

Praise the Lord! I have been making my comments from our New Testament Readings this time through the Word and we have been working our way through Psalms 119 at the pace of one verse a day. Psalms 119:89 says, **Your Word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.** When we base our lives on the Word, we are basing them on something that is eternal and it will never change.

In Acts 10, we see Peter preaching the Gospel to Cornelius. He was a Gentile, and that might not seem very important to us, but it was a huge issue to the Jews. They had so many prejudices against the Gentiles that they didn't even think God wanted to save them.

Here is what I want to emphasize for today. God wants all people to be saved and that included the Gentiles. So, God was working with Peter to preach to them. Since it was God's will, He was going to get Peter in line with that will. You see, God is all-powerful and He is able to teach us His ways. This will be a quite a process, but God is going to get it done.

Philippians 1:6 says, **being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.** God is the One who has started His good work in our lives and He is going to get the job done.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I love Your Word. Please continue to teach me Your ways and help me to live like You want. Help me to know if there are any areas of my life where I am not basing everything on the Word and help me to do better. I am also thankful that You are the One working in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday July 2

Scripture Reading: Job 23-25

Acts 10:24-48

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:90 says, **Your faithfulness continues through all generations; You established the Earth, and it endures.** God is in control and we can see that here. It is also wonderful that His faithfulness continues. He is always faithful and we can always trust Him. Even when you go through something hard, He is faithful and you can trust Him!

When Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his family, he told them about Jesus and His ministry. Look at what Peter said in verse 38, **how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.**

There are so many things we can learn from this one verse. We can see that Jesus had power and that power came from the Holy Spirit. This sure makes me want to stay full of the Holy Spirit.

We can see that sickness is from the devil and healing is from God. This makes me want to resist sickness and it makes me want to seek God's help when I need healing!

We can also see that God always wants to set people free from the devil and his works.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I want You to rule and reign in every area of my life. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Help me to never doubt it or Your goodness. I am also thankful that You always want to bless me and I am so glad that You are stronger than the devil and all of his works. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday July 3

Scripture Reading: Job 26-28

Acts 11

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:91 says, **Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve You.** A couple of days ago, we read that David said the Word is eternal. Today, we read him saying that the Word endures to that very day. I think both of these things are important. We need to know that His Word is eternal and that it applies to our lives today!

In Acts 11, Peter is explaining what happened when he went and preached to the Gentiles. You see, Peter was convinced that he had done the right thing, but others were still in the process of understanding what God was doing.

Acts 11:11-12 say, **"Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house."**

Peter mentions two things that happened. First these men came and invited him to come and preach the Gospel to them. Secondly, the Holy Spirit told him to go.

In these two things, I can see how God often leads us. Sometimes circumstances let us know that we have an open door and other times it is the Holy Spirit leading. When we have both of these things we can definitely know God is leading us.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that Your Word is true today and I want to live like You want. Help me to do that today and every day. I am also thankful that You lead me and guide me in the ways I should live. Please help me to know Your guidance better. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday July 4

Scripture Reading: Job 29-30

Acts 12

Praise the Lord! David makes an interesting statement in Psalms 119:92. **If Your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.** David was basically saying that he didn't think he would have made it in life if he hadn't based his life on the Word. I am sure that David was right, and if we base our lives on the Word we will make it and not perish.

In Acts 12, Peter was arrested for preaching the Gospel and he was put into prison. The Church knew they needed help from God so they prayed. An angel of the Lord came, set Peter free and he went to where they were praying. At first they couldn't believe he had been set free, but eventually they realized that God had answered their prayers.

There are a lot of things I could say about this, but basically this was a battle between God and the satanic forces trying to thwart God's will. Since we know that God is all powerful and in control of all things, it shouldn't surprise us that He won in the end.

Acts 12:24 says, **But the Word of God continued to increase and spread.** This was God's will and it was what happened. You see, God always wins and we are on His side! Praise the Lord for that.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that I am learning more of Your Word. I want to keep my life based on It and I know that You will bless me. I also ask You to bless my Pastor and the other people You have brought into my life to teach me the Word. Help them to know that they are appreciated and loved. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday July 5

Scripture Reading: Job 31-32

Acts 13:1-23

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:93 says, **I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have preserved my life.** David knew that the Word had given him life and he knew that his life was preserved by the Word. Listen to what Jesus said about the Word in Matthew 4:4, **Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God.'"**

Look at Acts 13:1-3, **In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**

They were worshipping and fasting. Then the Holy Spirit spoke. Those are evidently things that made Him feel welcome and they still make Him feel welcome.

Then after the Holy Spirit spoke, they fasted, prayed, laid their hands on those called and sent them off. We need to hear from God just like they needed to hear from Him. Maybe we should do the same kinds of things they did and believe that we will hear from Him too.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I know that I am here today because You have protected me and even saved my life. Help me to draw near to You and know that You will speak to me just like You spoke to the people in the verses we read today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday July 6

Scripture Reading: Job 33-34
Acts 13:24-52

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:94 says, **Save me, for I am Yours; I have sought out Your precepts.** When we give our lives to God, He will take care of them. Listen to what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:12, **That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know Whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.** Paul had entrusted his whole life to God and he knew God would take care of him.

Well, the Gospel is being preached to everyone, including the Gentiles. Look at what Acts 13:48 & 49 say, **When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the Word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The Word of the Lord spread through the whole region.** This was right in line with what God wanted, but not everyone was happy.

The next verse says, **But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.** These Jews didn't accept the fact that God wanted to bless the Gentiles. Quickly, look at how that believers handled this in the next verse, **So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.** They just kept doing what God wanted them to do.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. I commit my life to You and I am glad that You will take care of me. Please help me to know how You want me to live and help me to care about pleasing You more than anyone else. I know that Your ways are right. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday July 7

Scripture Reading: Job 35-37

Acts 14

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:95 says, **The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder Your statutes.** I wonder what we would fill our minds with if someone was literally trying to destroy us. David kept filling his mind with the Word and that was a good decision. It was good for him and is good for us.

Look at verses 8-10 from our reading for today, **In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.**

There are several interesting things to see in these verses. First of all, how do you think Paul saw that this man had faith to be healed? I think Paul saw him listening intently and Paul had faith that the Word was producing faith in the man.

Next, did you notice that Paul didn't spend any time deciding whether or not it was God's will to heal this man? Paul knew that Jesus had already provided for the healing of everyone. Look at what 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.**

Prayer: Lord, please help me to fill my mind with Your Word more consistently. I know this is a decision I have to make but I also know that I need Your help. I am also thankful for the fact that Your Word produces faith in my life and I want all that You have for me in every area. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday July 8

Scripture Reading: Job 38-39

Acts 15:1-21

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:96 says, **To all perfection I see a limit; but Your commands are boundless.** Anything we can see in the natural that we think is perfect, has limitations. The perfection of things diminishes over time but God's Word will last forever.

The Church was still dealing with the Gentiles being saved. I could actually say they were getting in line with God's will. Look at what verses 7-9 say, **After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for He purified their hearts by faith."**

This is Peter's defense. He basically said, "God has accepted the Gentiles by filling them with the Holy Spirit. So, who are we to reject them?"

In the end, God's will was done. If you are ever in a meeting where decisions need to be made, pray that God's will is what is accomplished. You see, His ways are always right, and getting in line with His will is always the right decision.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that I can study Your Word. Please help me to know that it is Your will that really matters and help me to quickly submit to You in all things. I don't ever want to get off track and I am so thankful that You want to save everyone and that even includes me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday July 9

Scripture Reading: Job 40-42

Acts 15:22-41

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:97 says, **Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long.** Meditation is a wonderful thing when we meditate on the right thing. We need to fill our minds with the Word of God! Joshua 1:8 says, **Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.**

The church sent a message to the Gentiles who were getting saved, instructing them further about how they should live as Christians.

Look at Acts 15:33, **After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.** Did you see the part in this verse that talks about “a blessing of peace”? As Christians, we have the Prince of Peace living inside of us. Because of that, we always have peace and we can share that blessing with others. Jesus said that we can speak a blessing of peace on people. If they receive it that is good, but if they reject it the peace will come back on us. Actually doing this might seem strange to you, but the Word tells us to do it so try it. I think you will find that it is a good thing and you will be blessed for obeying the Word.

Prayer: Lord, I speak a blessing of peace over every person reading this right now. I also want to commit myself to meditating on Your Word more. Help me to fill my mind with the truths of Your Word and help me to DO everything that You teach me. I also want to thank You for all the blessings You have brought into my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday July 10

Scripture Reading: Psalms 1-3

Acts 16:1-15

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:98 says, **Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.** We are so blessed to have the Word. We can even store it up in our hearts and then it will always be with us. I hope you have some Scriptures that you have memorized and I hope you review them often. They can be constant companions for you and we would all do well to memorize even more.

As we read through Acts, we see that some of the leadership traveled around preaching the Gospel and encouraging the believers. Look at Acts 16:4-5, **As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.**

Everything they did strengthened the Churches and encouraged them. I hope you have some people in your life that always strengthen and encourage you. If you do, you are blessed and you should thank God for those people because they are truly a gift from Him. You should also be that kind of a person for others. Don't wait any longer to do this. Find someone who needs encouragement and be that helpful person to them. Believe me, they will be blessed and you will too.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for Your Word. Help me to store up more of it in my life and help me to rely on You and Your Word more. I also thank You for those You have brought into my life to help me. Please strengthen me so I can be a blessing to others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday July 11

Scripture Reading: Psalms 4-6
Acts 16:16-40

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:99 says, **I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on Your statutes.** David was not speaking against teachers here. He was just saying that what we learn from the Word is what is really important. When you find anointed teachers who will teach you the Word, you have a really wonderful blessing from God.

I hope you read the verses from Acts 16 really closely. I know this is a story that you have probably heard before, but it is so good and it applies to so many things we face. I only have a short space to write to you about this, so let God speak to you personally.

I want to emphasize the fact that Paul and Silas praised the Lord right in the middle of their struggle. Everyone would have praised God when they were set free, and I am sure they did too, but they didn't wait until then. You see, it wouldn't take any faith to praise God then. It took faith to praise God when they were still in the problem!

Please take this and apply it in your life today. What problem are you facing today? Praise God right in the middle of that problem and don't ever quit. I don't know when your deliverance will come, but I know it will.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I thank You for speaking to me from Your Word today. Please help me to really meditate on what You are speaking to me. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. I also want to be more committed to praising You all the time. I know that You are worthy and I know that it is the right thing to do. So, I am going to do it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday July 12

Scripture Reading: Psalms 7-9

Acts 17:1-15

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:100 says, **I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey Your precepts.** Understanding is important and we should ask God to give us more of it. Then it is important to obey what He teaches us. Both of these things are important so don't miss either of them.

In our reading from Acts, we will cover some of the things that happened as the people went from place to place ministering to God's people. Look at what Acts 17:10-11 say, **As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.**

When Paul said this about the Bereans he was complimenting them. When people teach you the Word you should always feel free to study the Word on your own to make sure things line up with It. If someone didn't want you to do that, there might be a reason for you to find someone else to teach you the Word.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I am so glad that I have turned my life over to You. Please give me understanding into Your ways and help me to obey all that You show me. I am also thankful for the Word and the people You have brought into my life to teach me. Help me to know enough of Your Word to be able to study for myself even as others who are anointed by You are teaching me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday July 13

Scripture Reading: Psalms 10-12

Acts 17:16-34

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:101 says, **I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey Your Word.** Knowing and obeying the Word is so important. David said that doing these things would help him to avoid every evil path. Avoiding those things is much better than going on them for a while and then repenting.

Acts 17:16 says, **While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.** I am sure Paul was distressed because he knew these people were missing the truth and the life that they could have had from Jesus. Haven't you felt this same kind of distress when you were around some people who didn't know God and you just knew they would be so much better off if they would give their lives to Him?

Well, Paul ended up telling them about Jesus by taking something that they could relate to and guiding the conversation to the truth. He actually started talking about one of their idols and ended up telling them about Jesus. This was a good plan and it made some of them curious. Acts 17:32 says, **When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."** A seed had been planted and sometimes that is what we can do in people's lives.

Prayer: Lord, I want to keep my life from every evil path. Help me to consistently study Your Word and help me to live like You want. I also want to see more of the opportunities I have to share the Good News with people. Help me to know that people really do need You and help me to be bold enough to speak up. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday July 14

Scripture Reading: Psalms 13-16

Acts 18

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:102 says, **I have not departed from Your laws, for You Yourself have taught me.** When God teaches us something we need to be careful not to depart from it. Many times the Word says not to turn to the right or the left but to stay on the path God has for us. Believe me, it is better to stay on the path than to get off for a while and then get back on track.

In Acts 18, we read about Paul and his ministry in Corinth. While he was there some people accepted him and others rejected him. God was always with Paul, encouraging him to faithfully preach the Gospel.

Acts 18:9-10 say, **One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."**

When Paul was facing these hard things, God told him that He would be with him. Many times we see this happening in the Word. When a person knows that God is with them, they should have confidence. God also encouraged Paul to keep doing what he was called to do. God's calling on Paul's life didn't change when things got hard, and that is something we would do well to remember for ourselves.

Prayer: Lord, I want to keep my life on the straight path that You have for me. I know that Your plan for my life is right and I don't ever want to deviate from it. Help me to really know that You are always with me, and because of that I don't have anything to fear. 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 July 15

Scripture Reading: Psalms 17-18

Acts 19:1-20

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:103 says, **How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!** I am sure we have all experienced times like this when God has shown us something that is so wonderful. Having said that, I really think this should be what we say about the Word all the time. If this was our attitude more of the time, I think we would experience it more often.

Look at Acts 19:11-12, **God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.**

Do you think God could still do extraordinary things like this today? He can! Hebrews 13:8 says, **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** Jesus never changes, and the needs of people never seem to change, so God is willing doing extraordinary things today.

Verse 17 says, **When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.** We should want the Name of Jesus to be held in high honor today. Let Him rule and reign in your life and you will be helping that to happen.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for Your Word. I say that it is sweeter than honey in my mouth all the time. Help me to be more diligent in my studies of it. I also thank You that You never change. Help me to really believe that You are ready and willing to help me and others because You love us and because You want Your Name to be held in high honor. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday July 16

Scripture Reading: Psalms 19-21

Acts 19:21-41

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:104 says, **I gain understanding from Your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.** The Word sure seems to be speaking to us about staying off the wrong path a lot. Let's take these things as God personally speaking to us. Let God give you understanding from the Word and then live like He wants you to live.

One of my favorite books in the New Testament is the book of Ephesians. It is a letter written by Paul to a Church in Ephesus. So, what we are reading in Acts is how the Church at Ephesus was started.

In our reading for today, they had a riot! Paul was preaching about Jesus and there was a lot of idolatry in Ephesus. When the people who produced the idols realized they were going to lose money they came against Paul and his message.

What is interesting in this is the fact that one of the strongest Churches grew out of this strong opposition. You see, God really is stronger than the devil and He is building His Church. Look at what Jesus said in the last part of Matthew 16:18, **I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**

Prayer: Lord, help me to love Your ways more and help me to hate every wrong path. I also thank You for the reminder that it is You who is building Your Church. Help me to know that the devil can't defeat Your Church. I want to be a part of what You are doing. Please bless all the people in my Church. Help us to be strong in You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday July 17

Scripture Reading: Psalms 22-24

Acts 20:1-16

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:105 says, **Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.** God often uses His Word to guide and direct us. We need to take the steps He shows us and trust that He will give us what we need as we go along. This verse is a picture of a person who is walking at night with a light. These lights would only light a little way, so when the person took the step they could see, then they could see more. Doesn't this sound like your life?

Look at Acts 20:1-3, **When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-bye and set out for Macedonia. He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.**

Did you happen to see what I underlined in these verses? People always seem to need encouragement and God always seems to be providing it for His people. Look at what Paul wrote later in Philippians 2:1-2, **If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.** We should be encouraged in life because we are in Christ! Take some time and pray about these things for today. Let God encourage you and then be an encouragement to others. As you give, you will receive the very things you give.

Wednesday July 18

Scripture Reading: Psalms 25-27

Acts 20:17-38

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:106 says, **I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.** The Word tells us not to make commitments and then fail to follow through on them, Even with that in mind, this is a commitment that would be good to make and then KEEP IT.

Acts 20:17-18 say, **From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia."** When Paul was with them, he modeled how a Christian should really live.

The next two verses say, **"I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house."**

Paul was an example and he taught the Word. The believers needed both of these things and we still need them today. When you have someone who is an example and a good teacher of the Word, you have a real blessing and you need to thank God for them.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. Please help me to know how You want me to live and help me to be a DOER of Your Word and not a HEARER only. I also want to thank You for the people You have brought into my life to model the Christian life and to teach me the Word. Please bless them greatly for their service to You and me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday July 19

Scripture Reading: Psalms 28-30

Acts 21:1-14

Praise the Lord! Look at what David wrote in Psalms 119:107, **I have suffered much; preserve my life, O LORD, according to Your Word.** Even when David was suffering, he was keeping his focus on the Word. What you focus on in a time of trial is so important. Keep living for God and mediating on His Word and it will help you, even in the hard times.

I want to commend you for being in the Word so diligently. You really are growing and I just felt like I needed to encourage you. Keep going! God is adding things to your life that are helping you and they will help you in the future.

In our reading from Acts, Paul knew that he needed to go to Jerusalem because that was God's will for him. Some of the believers didn't want him to go because they knew he was going to face some hard things there, but Paul was determined to go.

Verses 12-13 say, **When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."** We should be like Paul and do what God has called us to do no matter what happens.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that You have always taken care of me. Help me to know that You will take care of me today and my future is in Your hands. I would not want to go back to running my own life. I really meant it when I gave it all to You. Please help me to know Your will for my life and help me to do it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday July 20

Scripture Reading: Psalms 31-33

Acts 21:15-40

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:108 says, **Accept, O LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me Your laws.** When you praise God is it willingly? Look at what Isaiah 1:19 says, **If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land.** We need to be WILLING and OBEDIENT.

Well, in our reading from Acts, Paul arrived in Rome. Verses 19-20 say, **Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law."**

This all sounds good. They were glad to see him and they were praising God for the Gentiles that were getting saved, but like so many other times there was another group of people who were not happy.

Verse 27 says, **When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him.** Isn't this interesting? One group was praising God and the other group was arresting Paul. Maybe we shouldn't be so surprised when some people don't like us for serving God.

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much. Help me to be willing AND obedient to You and Your ways. I want all that You have for me and I want to please You all the time. I also want to be a person who encourages others when they are living for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday July 21

Scripture Reading: Psalms 34-35

Acts 22

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:109 says, **Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law.** You may or may not ever be in a situation where you are constantly taking your life in your hands, but you should constantly remember His Word. Doing that will help you to be protected no matter what you go through and remember that God sometimes protects us from things that we don't even recognize as threats.

In our reading from Acts, Paul was telling about his conversion. Look at Acts 22:12-13, **A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.**

This is about all we know about this man named, Ananias but we can sure learn a lot about him. He was willing to go and pray for Paul, known as Saul then, even though Ananias knew that Saul was persecuting Christians. That took faith so we know he was a man of faith.

Ananias also boldly proclaimed to Paul that he was going to be healed. So, we can know that he believed in healing.

Prayer: Lord, I want to remember Your Word all the time. When times are good, I want to remember Your Word and when I am right in the middle of a trial, I want to remember Your Word. Help me to be faithful like Ananias and help me to believe in the things You have taught me from the Word. I know that living by faith is a good thing and I want all that You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday July 22

Scripture Reading: Psalms 36-37

Acts 23:1-11

Praise the Lord! What are you going to look at when people are trying to trap you? Look at what David said in Psalms 119:110, **The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts.** He just kept looking to God and His Word. We would all consider David a successful man of God and we will be successful when we do these same things.

There is a really important thing that I want you to see in our reading for today. Acts 23:11 says, **The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."**

I am going to refer back to this quite a few times as we finish up Acts. You see, God said Paul was going to Rome. So, whenever something came along to stop Paul or kill him, we are going to know that those things are going to fail because Paul was going to Rome!

This might seem like a strange thing for me to point out but it will help you when you know that God has made you some promises too. He is always able to get His will done. So, take the things that God speaks to you, believe them and then never quit. God will get you to where He wants you.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that You have given me such free access to Your Word. Help me to focus on It and Your promises all the time. I am also thankful for all the promises You have given me personally and I don't ever want to quit believing them. Have Your way in my life! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday July 23

Scripture Reading: Psalms 38-40

Acts 23:12-35

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:111 says, **Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.** If you ever get the idea that David really loved the Word, you would be right. The more we love the Word, the more we will find that God will bless us. He wants to teach us His ways. So, do your part and know that God will do His part and teach you along the way.

In yesterday's devotion, I made the point that Paul was going to Rome. Now, look at the very next couple of verses, **The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul."**

Isn't this just like the devil? God makes a promise and the devil comes to steal it. Listen to what Jesus said in Mark 4:15, **Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.**

We need to hold onto the things God speaks to us! God said Paul was going to Rome and believe me, Paul was going to Rome.

Prayer: Thank You Lord, that Your Word is my heritage just like it was for David. Help me to hold onto the things You speak to me and help me to never quit. I know that the devil comes to steal but I am not going to let Him take Your promises from me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday July 24

Scripture Reading: Psalms 41-43

Acts 24

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:112 says, **My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.** David had set his heart on obeying the Word. You can set your heart on anything that You want so make sure you set it on something that is good and doing what the Word says is always the best thing.

Now let me make a point about Paul going to Rome. God had said to him that he was going to testify about Jesus in Rome and you know that is going to happen. I am sure that Paul started to make plans to go to Rome when he first heard what God said but Paul wasn't going to make another ordinary mission trip there. He ended up being arrested and tried several times. Ultimately, he appealed to Caesar and he went there to face another trial. Here's my point, Paul didn't go to Rome like he planed but he did go there.

Look at Acts 24:27, **When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.** Paul was in prison waiting for two years. Sometimes God uses the hard things we go through to get us to the place where He wants us. Now, please don't get the impression that I am giving up on all the things I have said about God loving us and only wanting to bless us. All those things are still true and we should always trust Him.

Prayer: Lord, I set my heart on keeping Your decrees to the very end. I don't ever want to quit and I don't even want to pull back from my totally commitment to You and Your will for my life. Please help me to remember this commitment when I am tempted to forget it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday July 25

Scripture Reading: Psalms 44-46
Acts 25

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:113 says, **I hate double-minded men, but I love your law.** James 1:7-8 say, **That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.** When a person is double-minded, they will be unstable in every area of life and that is a real problem.

Look at verses 7-8 from our reading for today, **When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."**

It is important for us to remember that Paul hadn't done anything wrong. He was really under arrest for preaching the Gospel and that is a good thing, not a bad thing. So, these verses tell us that his opponents brought charges against him but they couldn't prove any of them.

Paul was willing to defend himself a little bit. He would tell the people that he hadn't done anything wrong and now we see Paul appealing to Caesar. When Paul did that, they had to send him to Rome to stand trial and that is where God said Paul was going.

Prayer: Lord, I don't want to be double-minded. I want to have my mind filled with Your Word and I don't ever want to doubt what You have said. I also want to know Your will for my life and then I want to stay on track to accomplish everything You have for me to do in life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday July 26

Scripture Reading: Psalms 47-49

Acts 26

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:114 says, **You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in Your Word.** This is a wonderful verse. It reminds us of many great things God has done for us. He always wants to protect us and He always wants to give us hope. Stay close to him and accept all that He has for you.

Acts 26:22-23 say, **But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen - that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to His own people and to the Gentiles.** Every time Paul got the chance to speak, he would preach the Gospel because that is what he was called to do and he was faithful to that calling.

Verse 28 says, **Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"** Paul was trying to get the king saved here.

Verse 32 says, **Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."** This king is going to send Paul to Rome. Think of it this way, the government is paying for Paul to go where God wanted him to go.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that You are my refuge and shield. Help me to remember this when I need it the most. I also want to know that You are in control of my life so I can trust You with every detail. Please bless all my brothers and sisters who are doing these devotions. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday July 27

Scripture Reading: Psalms 50-52

Acts 27:1-25

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:115 says, **Away from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commands of my God!** David was committed to following God and he wasn't going to let anyone or anything stop him. Listen to what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:33, **Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."** Don't let anyone hold you back from going on with God.

Well, God said Paul going to go to Rome and Paul is on his way. His enemies, who wanted to kill him, couldn't stop him and the devil couldn't stop him.

Now the weather is even going to try to stop him, but God was in control and Paul is going to Rome. Look at Acts 27:25-26, **So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.** They were going to have to go through some hard things but they were ultimately going to make it.

It is interesting that Paul told the people with him that they were going to be saved too. You see, God was going to protect Paul and that protection helped those who were traveling with him. I wonder how many times unsaved people have been kept from harm because God was protecting some Christian with them.

Prayer: Lord, I really do want to keep Your commands all the time. Please help me to recognize it if there are some people who consistently work against that process and help me to know what to do. I know they need help too, but if they lead me astray I know I need to limit my time with them until I am strong enough to influence them for the good. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday July 28

Scripture Reading: Psalms 53-55

Acts 27:26-44

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:116 says, **Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed.** God's Word sustains us. If you find yourself in a situation where you feel down and drained, turn to God and His Word for help. When you do that, He will help you, and you will find that your hopes are not dashed.

In Acts, we are reading about Paul going through a shipwreck but God was still with him. Being a Christian and being in God's will doesn't guarantee us that we will never go through anything hard, but it does guarantee us that God will be with us to help us.

In yesterday's reading, Paul said that the people with him would be safe. In today's reading, we see that some of them started to flee from him and he warned them not to go. Verse 31 says, **Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."**

These men ultimately stayed with Paul and they were saved just like he said they would be. Think about the confidence that Paul had in God. He knew God would take care of him and he was willing to boldly proclaim that protection. That is faith.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that You sustain me. Help me to know that my time in the Word is part of why I am so protected. Help me to know that these things are true and help me to be willing to boldly proclaim them when it is appropriate to do so. I also ask You to bless Church tomorrow. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday July 29

Scripture Reading: Psalms 56-58

Acts 28:1-15

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:117 goes right along with what we have been covering in Acts. It says, **Uphold me, and I will be delivered; I will always have regard for your decrees.** God was upholding Paul and he was delivering him. Since we can see that God did those things for David and Paul, we should be able to trust Him to take care of us too.

How would you handle it if you were living for God, got arrested and then faced a shipwreck on the way to where God said you should go? Oh yea, then after the shipwreck, you were bitten by a poisonous snake. Well, here is what Paul did. He prayed for a bunch of sick people, got them healed and then he preached the Gospel to everyone there! That is having a good attitude and staying on course by doing God's will all the time.

Now please don't miss the point. All these wonderful things happened while Paul was going through a very difficult situation. Way too many people say they would serve God if they could just get through the hard things they are facing. Paul certainly didn't wait for everything to be easy before he did what God wanted him to do. He was ready and willing all the time and that is why we see God doing so many things through him.

Prayer: Lord, I am thankful that You uphold and deliver me. Help me to know that You want me to be sharing Jesus right in the middle of everything I face. I can see that Paul even took the hard things and turned them into opportunities to share You, and I know that I should be doing the same thing. Please help me to be more focused on the needs of others rather than on my needs alone. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday July 30

Scripture Reading: Psalms 59-61

Acts 28:16-31

Praise the Lord! David was committed to living for God and he is comparing the blessings that came to him to other people who rejected God. Psalms 119:118 says, **You reject all who stray from your decrees, for their deceitfulness is in vain.** David was accepted by God and these people were rejected. We sure want to be on David's side!

Well, this is my last time to point out that God said Paul was going to Rome and Paul went to Rome. I am sure that promise from God is what Paul held on to many times. We need to know that God will keep His promises to us and we need to hang on to them when we feel like we are not going to make it. God is always faithful!

Paul made it to Rome and look at the last two verses of Acts, **For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul is in Rome just like God said and He is doing just what God told him to do. I like the part that says, **without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.** He had faced and overcame a lot of hindrances to get there, but now he is there.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live like You want. I am thankful that You have made me acceptable to You because of what Jesus has done for me. Please help me to keep my focus on You all the time and help me to know that You are well able to bring about Your will in my life. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday July 31

Scripture Reading: Psalms 62-64
Romans 1

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:119 says, **All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross; therefore I love your statutes.** David was totally convinced that living for God was the best life there was. He knew that those who rejected Him had no hope, and so David was going to keep living for God no matter what he faced. That was a great decision for David and it is a great decision for us too.

The book of Romans is a letter that Paul wrote to the believers in Rome. It was to introduce him and his message to them before he traveled there. You see, Paul knew that he was going to Rome and so he wanted to prepare the way for more effective ministry.

Look at what Paul wrote in Romans 1:16-17, **I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."**

Paul certainly was not ashamed of the Gospel. He preached it everywhere he went and every chance he had. These verses also mention a righteousness that comes by revelation. Ask God to reveal more to you about righteousness and He will.

Prayer: Lord, I want to be more like David. I want to love Your Word even more than I already do. Please teach me more about the righteousness that I have in You. I also want to live by faith and I thank You for all that You have taught me this month. In Jesus' Name, Amen.