

1 June 2007

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

God bless you. I am so glad that you have taken this set of devotions for June. At the end of this month, we will be half of the way through the year and you will have read half of the Bible and that is great. 2 Timothy 2:15 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.** As you do your best, God will teach you His ways.

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

Gladly in His Service,

Friday June 1

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 4-6

John 12:20-50

Praise the Lord! We will be finishing up John and we will cover part of Acts this month. We have also been spending a little time each day in Psalms 119. So, verse 59 says, **I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to Your statutes.** Take some time and think about your life and then make the same decision David made. Choose to know God's Word, believe it and live it!

In the Gospel of John, there are several places where it says that Jesus' hour had not yet come. These were times when people were trying to arrest Him or kill Him and they could not do it because God was in control of when Jesus was going to die on the cross.

Now, look at John 12:23, **Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."** In case you are not sure Jesus was talking about His dying on the cross, look at the next verse, **I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.**

When I write to you about Jesus dying on the cross, I usually emphasize the fact that He died for our sins, but this verse makes an additional point. He also died on the cross so God could have a harvest of more sons and daughters of God!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for all that You are teaching me from the Word. As I consider my ways, I know that I want to turn my life completely over to You. I want to live my life just like You want and I know that is the best life there is. Please teach me more about being Your child and help me to live my life in a way that is worthy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday June 2

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 7-9

John 13:1-17

Praise the Lord! In the verse we looked at from Psalms 119 yesterday, David said he had looked at his life and he was going to live the Word. For today, verse 60 says, **I will hasten and not delay to obey Your commands.** I really like this point. He was going to live what the Word says AND he was going to do it right away. You see, doing what God wants quickly is always a good thing. So, when you hear from Him, do what He says quickly!

Yesterday, we saw Jesus saying that the hour for Him to die on the cross was happening. The next five chapters are Jesus ministering to His disciples before He went to the cross.

In the first part of chapter 13, He served them and washed their feet. This is a powerful example of why He came and how we are supposed to live. He came to be a servant and we are supposed to serve people as well.

Earlier Jesus said that people who want to be great in His Kingdom should be servants and He lived what He taught. So, He was being a servant here and look at what He said in verse 17, **Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.** This is a point that I have made many times. When you know what God wants you to do, doing it is what brings the blessing.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You are teaching me Your ways. Please help me to really learn everything You are teaching me and help me to be quick to DO what You show me. I want all of the blessings You have for me and I know that they will come as I do my part. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday June 3

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 10-12

John 13:18-38

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:61 says, **Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget Your law.** David was determined to live like God wanted and he wasn't going to let anything or anyone hold him back. Some people get distracted so easily and we should be more like David. Decide ahead of time to live for God and then follow through on that commitment.

Jesus is meeting with His disciples knowing that He is going to the cross to die. Look at what He told them in John 13:34-35, **A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.**

Jesus didn't refer to very many things as commands so when He did we should really pay attention. He commanded us to love one another! Loving God and loving people is how Jesus said we would fulfill the whole law.

These verses also tell us that loving like God wants will help others to know that we are really Christians. You see, people without Jesus don't love this way. They often love with strings attached. If you please me and make me happy, I will love you but if you displease me, I will stop loving you. We need to love like Jesus loves us. He loves us all the time no matter what!

Prayer: Lord, I want to love Your Word more and I want to live it more consistently. I also want to be more obedient to Your command to love others more. I really do want to be a good witness for You and I can see that this is part of the process. Please help me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday June 4

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 13-16

John 14

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:62 says, **At midnight I rise to give You thanks for Your righteous laws.** Those who come to Church on Wednesday nights at Creative know that we have been talking about letting the Lord wake us up in the night. When He does that, we have been getting up and spending time with Him and it has been a very good thing just like it was a good thing for David.

John 14 is such a wonderful chapter and I only have one day to talk about it here. Verse 1 says, **Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me.** When you face something hard the first thing you need to do is to keep your trust in God! Don't let your heart be troubled. God is still in control and you can trust Him. He has seen you through everything else in your life and He will see you through what you are facing.

Verse 27 says, **Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.** Jesus gives us His peace. When we sense His peace we need to embrace it. Don't talk yourself out of it. It is interesting that this verse talks about not letting your hearts be troubled again. The peace of God will help you in this process. So, keep your trust in God, accept His peace and don't let your heart be troubled!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for the good work You are doing in my life. Help me to always respond to You when You are talking to me even if it is in the middle of the night. Thank You as well for reminding me to keep my trust in You. Help me to remember this and help me to not allow my heart to be troubled and thank You so much for Your peace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday June 5

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 17-19

John 15

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:63 says, **I am a friend to all who fear You, to all who follow Your precepts.** Haven't there been times when you have met a Christian and immediately felt close to them? That is what David is talking about here. Christians should feel close because we are family members and we have a lot in common, not the least of which is Jesus and the Word!

We need to stay connected to Jesus. We find life in Him! Verse 5 says, **I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.** If we would realize how little we can do without His help we would stay much closer to Him.

Verse 7 says, **If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.** Here is the other side of this. When we do stay connected we will be effective.

In the last part of this chapter, Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit. He is with us all the time to help us. Verse 26 says, **When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about Me.**

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I love it when You speak to me. Please help me to be quick to hear You and quick to obey You. Help me to know how much I need Your help and help me to stay connected to You all the time. I am also thankful for the people You bring into my life to help me and I am really thankful for the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday June 6

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 20-22

John 16:1-15

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:64 says, **The earth is filled with Your love, O LORD; teach me Your decrees.** God's love is always around us and yet there are times when we sense it more. David was having a time like this here. Then he asked God to teach him. You see, a revelation of God's love will draw us to Him and it will help us to know that we can ask Him for His help.

A couple of days ago, I pointed out that Jesus was speaking to the disciples right before He went to the cross. Jesus was facing a very hard thing and yet He was ministering to them. This shows us how much He loves us.

Look at what He said in verse 1, **All this I have told you so that you will not go astray.** The things He was speaking to them would keep them on track and they will help us to stay on track when we know them, believe them and do what they say.

Jesus also talked to them about the Holy Spirit again. If you get the idea that Jesus was saying the Holy Spirit could help them, you are getting the point. John 16:12-13 say, **I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.**

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to stay close to You all the time. I thank You for Your love and I ask You to teach me Your ways. Holy Spirit, please fill me, guide me and teach me more of God's ways. I want to keep learning and I don't ever want to go astray. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday June 7

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 23-25

John 16:16-33

Praise the Lord! **Do good to your servant according to Your Word, O LORD.** That is Psalms 119:65. David knew God well and so he knew that God only had good things for him. The more we have a correct concept of God, we will know the same things. Being in God's Word will help you to know God and it will help you to know that He is love, He loves you and He wants to do good to you all the time.

Jesus was teaching the disciples things that would help them. He talked to them about the Holy Spirit several times and He talked to them about answered prayer. John 16:24 says, **Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.** Isn't it also interesting that He tied answered prayer to joy! When we are connected to Jesus and praying, we will have answers and we will have joy.

Also look at what Jesus said in verse 33, **I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.** Now, Jesus talked to them about peace again. In the world we will sometimes have trouble but we can always have peace in Him. Even in the midst of trouble, we can have peace because of Jesus and His work in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that I know You and Your goodness. Help me to remember that You always have good for me and help me to accept everything You have for me. I also thank You for the Holy Spirit, answered prayer, joy and peace. All these things are examples of how much You love me and of Your goodness. Please help me to live for You and help me to represent You well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday June 8

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 26-28

John 17

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:66 says, **Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in Your commands.** It is always appropriate to ask God to teach You His ways and we can know that He will do it. It is also important to believe the things He teaches us.

John 17 is a prayer that Jesus prayed before going to the cross. I share that timing because it is interesting to see how little He prayed for Himself. He spent most of the time praying for those with Him and us.

John 17:17 says, **Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth.** To be sanctified means to be set apart for God and His purposes. We are sanctified by the Word. So, keep studying His Word every day and it will help you to be set apart for God and His work.

Verses 20-21 say, **My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.** Jesus prayed for us and He prayed that we would be one just like He and the Father were one. You see, God always blesses unity and the more we are in unity the more blessed we will be.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I ask You to keep teaching me Your ways. I really do want to learn them and I know that I do better when I live like You want. I also ask You to set me apart for You and Your work by the Word I am learning. Help me to live in unity with others and help me to know if there is anyone specific You want to talk to me about right now. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday June 9

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 29-31

John 18:1-23

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:67 says, **Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your Word.** When David went through some hard things, he learned God's ways better. Every situation we face will help us to grow in Him if we will keep our attitude right. We need to keep studying His Word and we need to keep obeying it no matter what we face.

Now we have Jesus being arrested. It is interesting that He could have escaped if He had wanted to. Verses 4-6 say, **Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am He," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.** He knew what was going to happen, and when He identified Himself they all fell to the ground. Jesus could have walked away at that point but this was the hour that He had come for. He came to die on the cross. So, He was not going to avoid it now.

Right after this Peter tried to defend Jesus with a sword, and again Jesus accepted God's will for His life. Verse 11 says, **Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?"**

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I know that Your ways are always right. Please help me to obey You and Your Word all the time. I am so thankful that Jesus came and died on the cross for my sins. Help me to know that You loved me enough to meet that need in my life and that You will meet all of my needs today. I also ask You to bless Church tomorrow. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday June 10

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 32-33

John 18:24-40

Praise the Lord! I have consistently made the point to you that God is good and Psalms 119:68 says that very thing. **You are good, and what You do is good; teach me Your decrees.** The more we renew our minds to this wonderful truth, the better we will do. It is always the devil who comes to steal, kill and destroy. God is good and He always gives us life and life in abundance.

Right in the middle of what Jesus was going through, we have the account of Peter denying the Lord three times. Jesus knew this was going to happen and He had even warned Peter. Now, here's what I want to emphasize for today. Jesus still loved Peter and He was going to see Peter through all this.

We would all do better if we could grasp the love of God more. In Paul's writings, we see that he often prayed that people would be able to know the love of God more. He did that because he knew that it would help them.

I want to pray for you right now, "I pray for you right now that you would be able to grasp God's love more and I pray that the knowledge of His love would transform your life! Lord, help the person reading this to know that You love them all the time, even when they let You down and help them to know that You are going to see them through what they are facing."

Prayer: Lord, help me to accept that You love me and that You are never going to quit working in my life. I know that I have nowhere else to turn and I wouldn't want to even if I did. I also pray that You will continue to teach me from the Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday June 11

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 34-36

John 19:1-22

Praise the Lord! How do you handle it when people come against you and lie about you? Psalms 119:69 says, **Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep Your precepts with all my heart.** David just kept loving God and His ways. That is how we need to react too.

John 19:1-3 say, **Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They clothed Him in a purple robe and went up to Him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck Him in the face.**

When Jesus took that crown of thorns on His head, He was taking our poverty. 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.** Jesus became poor for us so we could be blessed!

Everything Jesus took upon Himself, He did for us. He took our sins. He took our death. He took our judgment and He took our poverty. A couple of days ago, I prayed that you would have a greater grasp of God's love and we can sure see His love in all these things. We need to accept His love and the things He has provided for us and then we need to be thankful.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live for You all the time. I am also so thankful for all that You have provided for me. Please teach me more of what You have provided for me and help me to renew my mind to the truths of Your Word. Help me to grasp Your love more and help me to show it to others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday June 12

Scripture Reading: Ezra 1-2

John 19:23-42

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:69-70 say, **Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep Your precepts with all my heart. Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in Your law.** When people reject the Word their hearts become callous and unfeeling. We can be sensitive to God and His ways because we are consistently studying His Word.

Look at John 19:25-27, **Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.** Even while Jesus was dying on the cross, He was still looking out for others and meeting their needs. He is so wonderful!

Verse 30 says, **When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.** When Jesus said, "It is finished." He had completed all the work on the cross. He had borne all our sins, sicknesses, death, judgment and poverty. He had paid the price so we can come into relationship with God. Our sins had separated us from God and now Jesus had finished paying the price so we could be forgiven.

Prayer: Lord, I want to keep my heart open and tender toward You and Your ways. Please help me to always be receptive to everything You say. I am also so thankful that You are always looking out for me and helping me with my life. I am amazed at how much You love me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday June 13

Scripture Reading: Ezra 3-5

John 20

Praise the Lord! The statement that David makes in Psalms 119:71 might stretch some of you. It says, **It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn Your decrees.** Can you imagine going through something hard and having it be good thing? Well, it ends up being a good thing if we grow through it and learn more of God's Word. Listen to what James said in James 1:2-3, **Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.**

John 20 covers the resurrection of Jesus. We serve the risen Lord Jesus Christ and that truth makes all the difference.

In this chapter, Jesus spoke PEACE over the disciples three times. Let's look at each time. John 20:19, **On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"** John 20:21 says, **Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you."** And finally, John 20:26 says, **A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"**

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I really do want to live for You all the time. Help me to keep my focus on You and the good work You are doing in my life and help me to never get distracted. I also thank You for the peace You have brought into my life. Help me to embrace it more. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday June 14

Scripture Reading: Ezra 6-8

John 21

Praise the Lord! Look at what David said in Psalms 119:72, **The law from Your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.** If a person really believed this statement, they would surely spend more time in the Word! Take some time today and think about this statement and see if the Lord speaks something personally to you about your priorities.

At the very end of the Gospel of John, he wrote this, **This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.**

Jesus ministered for 3½ years and He did many things during that time. I think of verses that say something like this, “And He healed them all.” Or “He healed every sickness and every disease.” And I remember that one time He fed 5,000 men plus women and children. That means there must have about 20,000 people there.

So, when John said that Jesus did many things that are not written in this book, it is very easy for me to accept it. Here’s another example. Think about your life. If someone came up to you and said, “What has God done for you?” You would list some things, but I guarantee there would be many, many things you wouldn’t even think of or list.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to value Your Word more. Help me to know that You are always working and help me to be more thankful for what You have done in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday June 15

Scripture Reading: Ezra 9-10

Acts 1

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:73 says, **Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn Your commands.** God made us and He can help us to understand His Word. Our part is to ask Him for help and then study. 2 Timothy 2:15 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.** As you do your best, keep asking God for help and He will help you.

Some people call Acts the Acts of the Apostles and that is probably all right, but I prefer to call it the Acts of the Holy Spirit working through the Apostles.

Acts 1:8 says, **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth.** They were supposed to wait until they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus knew they were not able to do all that He wanted them to do in their own strength. They were going to need help from God and the Holy Spirit brought that help. Actually they needed more than help. They needed POWER and that is what Jesus said they would receive when the Holy Spirit came.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You are willing to speak to me through the Word. Please help me to do my best as I study Your Word. I want to be equipped by the Word and I want the power that the Holy Spirit brings. So, please teach me and fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to be a good witness for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday June 16

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 1-3

Acts 2:1-13

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:74 says, **May those who fear You rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in Your Word.** We should rejoice when we see someone putting their hope and trust in God. You see, it is our job to support others when they are stepping out in faith. Don't ever discourage someone who is putting their hope and trust in God and His Word.

Jesus told the disciples to wait until they were filled with the Holy Spirit and that is exactly what they did. Chapter 2, verse 1 says, **When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.** They were together and they were waiting. I know most people expect me to write about them being filled with the Holy Spirit (and we will cover that) but I decided to talk about their obedience first. If they hadn't done their part, they could have missed out on what God had for them.

Ok, now I will go on to them being filled. Verse 4 says, **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.** God said He would fill them and they were filled.

So, the disciples did their part and God did His part. This is how things worked back then and it is how things still work today.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for the things You are doing in my life. Please help me to rejoice more when I see You working in other people's lives. I also ask You to speak to me right now if there is anything that You have asked me to do that I need to do. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday June 17

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 4-6

Acts 2:14-47

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:75 says, **I know, O LORD, that Your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me.** God's Word is always righteous and we can always trust Him. David ascribed everything in his life to the Lord. He even talked about the Lord afflicting him. We know that Jesus has taken all of God's wrath from us.

As soon as the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, things changed in their lives. Peter, who was afraid to stand up for Jesus, was now preaching to thousands of people. You see, Peter had received power just like Jesus said!

He not only preached to them, he was effective and 3,000 people were saved. Then they all wanted to grow. Acts 2:46-47 say, **Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

So, the disciples waited like God said, God did His part by filling them, and now the Church is growing. It sounds to me like things are working pretty well and this shouldn't surprise us. God always knows what we should do, and when we obey Him it is always right.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I love Your Word. Please help me to remember that all of Your ways are right and they are righteous. I know that I can trust You in everything I face in life. Help me to hear from You and help me to obey You quickly. I know that Your ways are always best for me and they will help me to have more of Your blessings in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday June 18

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 7-8

Acts 3

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:76 says, **May Your unfailing love be my comfort, according to Your promise to Your servant.** Aren't you glad that His love never fails? I sure am and I take great comfort in that truth. God makes promises to us and we are blessed when we believe them and live like He wants.

The first part of Acts 3 is a miracle and I hope you read it closely. This man had never walked and he was instantly healed and it caused quite a stir. Some people were happy and praised God and others weren't happy and they persecuted the believers.

During this whole process, Peter preached another sermon and I want to you look at what he said in Acts 3:19, **Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.**

When we repent and turn to God, our sins are forgiven and there is a refreshing that comes from the Lord. Let me show you what I mean. Has there ever been a time in your life when you had sinned and not asked God to forgive you? At times like that, we feel guilty and weighted down. Discouragement can come and we often feel defeated. When that is happening, we need to turn to the Lord, confess our sins and let Him forgive us. Then we will have that refreshing that only comes from Him.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that Your love never fails. I know I have tested it at times and yet You are always loving toward me and I am so thankful. Help me to turn to You for forgiveness when I need it and help me not to put up with feeling separated from You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday June 19

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 9-11

Acts 4:1-22

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:77 says, **Let Your compassion come to me that I may live, for Your law is my delight.** Look at all the things we can be thankful for in this one verse; His compassion, His life and His Word. The more we delight in these things the more we will see them evident in our lives.

When the disciples were questioned about the man who was healed, they were quick to tell everyone that it was Jesus and faith in His Name that did the healing.

Acts 4:1-2 say, **The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.**

These guys didn't want Jesus preached because those who turned to Him were turning away from the religious leaders. Look at the next two verses, **They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.** This all sounds like good news to us but the religious leaders didn't like it.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for all the blessings You bring into my life. Help me to know and remember that everything good in my life has come from You. I also ask You to keep teaching me Your ways and help me to submit to You so You can work more through my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday June 20

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 12-13

Acts 4:23-37

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:78 says, **May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause; but I will meditate on Your precepts.** Even when people came against David without cause, he kept meditating on the Word. He really did have his priorities right and doing these same things will help us so much.

Peter and John had actually been arrested during this whole process and look at what they did when they were released. Acts 4:23 says, **On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.** They went to the other believers and let them know what had happened.

Then they prayed together and look at what they asked for in verses 29 & 30, **Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your Word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.** They asked for more boldness and more miracles. Those were the two things that had gotten them into trouble in the first place.

You see, they had been filled with the Holy Spirit and now they were being witnesses and they were not going to stop!

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to keep seeking You and Your ways no matter what happens. Even if I have to face some opposition, I want to keep living like You want. Please fill me with Your Spirit, give me boldness and show Your power through me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday June 21

Scripture Reading: Esther 1-3

Acts 5:1-16

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:79 says, **May those who fear You turn to me, those who understand Your statutes.** When we fear the Lord like David did, we will be on the right track and we will be attracted to others who are living for Him.

In Acts 5, there was a problem in the Church and the Holy Spirit took care of it. Look at the last two verses of chapter 4, **Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.**

This was a good thing and they took the money and helped people who were in need. In chapter 5, Ananias and Sapphira sold some land and lied about how much they had received for it. They wanted everyone to think they had given it all when they hadn't.

Look at verse 9, **Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."** Here is what I want to comment on for today. The Holy Spirit is God and He knows everything, so people can't lie to Him and we can trust Him to take care of problems in the Church.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You are teaching me Your ways. I don't want to miss anything You are showing me. I am also thankful for the reminder that You know everything. Please help me to never lie to You. I also ask You to bless all my brothers and sisters who are doing these devotions. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday June 22

Scripture Reading: Esther 4-6

Acts 5:17-42

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:80 says, **May my heart be blameless toward Your decrees, that I may not be put to shame.** If all our hearts were blameless toward God's decrees, we would sure do better. Yesterday, we talked about Ananias and Sapphira. Their hearts were not blameless.

Earlier, I told you that the religious leaders weren't happy about Jesus being preached because it was costing them converts. Look at Acts 5:17-18, **Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.**

There you have it. They were jealous. What were they jealous about? Look at the last two verses from yesterday's reading, **As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.**

People were getting healed and set free by the disciples and then the people would become followers of Jesus. That meant the religious people were losing followers.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to be blameless toward You. I want to live for You and do all that You have called me to do. If some people don't like what happens, I still want to live for You and please You. I also pray that all of us doing these devotions will really live for You this weekend. Help us to represent You well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday June 23

Scripture Reading: Esther 7-10

Acts 6

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:81 says, **My soul faints with longing for Your salvation, but I have put my hope in Your Word.** Put your hope in God's Word and keep it there! Be like the disciples in John 6. They said they didn't have anywhere else to turn.

We have been talking about the Church growing and now they had to add some helpers. The first verses of Acts 6 say, **In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word."**

Here's what I want to emphasize. When everyone was doing their part, all the work got done. Each of us needs to find what God wants us to be doing and we need to do it. Then all the work will get done. One more thing – everyone was serving and that is where you will start too.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I love Your Word. Help me to keep all my hope and confidence in You and Your Word. I also pray that You will show me how I can serve in the Body of Christ and help me to be faithful! I also ask You to bless Church tomorrow. Help us all to go ready to serve. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday June 24

Scripture Reading: Job 1-3

Acts 7:1-19

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:82 says, **My eyes fail, looking for Your promise; I say, "When will You comfort me?"** David was looking for God to come and comfort him. We have the Holy Spirit in our lives to bring us comfort. As a matter of fact, He is called the Comforter!

Yesterday, I talked to you about being faithful. Stephen was one of the seven men picked to serve tables. He was faithful and so God used him in more ways. Acts 6:8 says, **Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.**

When this happened the religious people showed up again and opposed him and his message. They arrested Stephen and put him on trial.

Acts 7:1 says, **Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"** Here's my point for today. When they asked him a question, he took it as an opportunity to preach the Gospel. I hope you can catch this. Most people would have taken their chance to speak as an opportunity to defend themselves, but Stephen didn't. You see, he wasn't called to defend himself. He was called to be a witness and to preach the Gospel and so that is what he did.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful for the comfort that You promise to bring to me. I am also grateful for the Word today and the reminder that being faithful is what I should be doing. I really do want to be used by You more and I know that I need to be faithful right where I am. Help me to see opportunities to be faithful at Church today and help me to take them. I don't want to miss anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Monday June 25

Scripture Reading: Job 4-6

Acts 7:20-43

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:83 says, **Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget Your decrees.** David was talking about being dried out, and yet he was going to hold on to the Word. Believe me, if you keep holding on to the Word, you won't feel all dried out very long.

Yesterday, we talked about Stephen preaching to the religious leaders of that day. They definitely didn't like what he had to say and they ended up having Stephen killed.

Act 7:59-60 say, **While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.**

Listen to what Paul later wrote in Romans 8:29, **For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.** Paul, who was Saul and consenting to the stoning of Stephen, later wrote that Christians will be ultimately be conformed to the image of Jesus! Why am I sharing this? Because Stephen died very much like Jesus died. They both asked God to forgive those who were killing them!

Prayer: Lord, I love You so much and I am glad that I have given my life to You. Thank You for teaching me so many things and help me to really remember them. Whether I live or die I want to honor You. I can see that is exactly how Stephen lived and died and I want to be more like Him. Please continue to teach me about being conformed to Your image and help me to know how that applies in my life today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday June 26

Scripture Reading: Job 7-9

Acts 7:44-60

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:84 says, **How long must Your servant wait? When will You punish my persecutors?** Have you ever felt like this? I am sure we all have. Well, let me assure you that God knows everything that is happening and He will straighten everything out in the end. We really can trust Him!

I just realized that I wrote the devotion yesterday on the verses we have for our reading for today. Sorry about that. Since I wrote to you about our being conformed to the image of Jesus, I think I will give you some more on that for today.

Romans 8:29 says, **For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.** It is God's ultimate goal for you to be conformed to the image of Jesus. So, when you face a decision, you can ask how Jesus would handle it. Then do what He would do and you will be on track.

Look at what John 12:23-24 say, **Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."** When Jesus talked about being glorified, He was talking about going to the cross.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to keep all my trust and confidence in You. Please help me to know that You will sort everything out in the end. I also ask You to continue to teach me about being conformed to Your image. Thank You Father for giving Your Son. Help us to be a good harvest on that giving . In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday June 27

Scripture Reading: Job 10-12

Acts 8:1-25

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:85 says, **The arrogant dig pitfalls for me, contrary to Your law.** David is letting the Lord know what others are trying to do but God already knew all about it. Now, I don't want to be too hard on David but God knows everything and we need to spend more time telling Him that we are going to trust Him.

Well, I am back on the right verses for today. Acts 8:1 says, **And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.**

Now, let me fill in some gaps. Stephan had just died. While dying, he asked God to forgive those who killed him. Saul, who will later be called Paul, was there giving his approval.

What do you think Saul thought when Stephen asked God to forgive him? We don't know what impact that had on him right then, but we do know that Saul was saved in the next chapter! So, Stephen asked God to forgive Saul and God forgave Saul. That is pretty good, huh? Later on we will read about Paul regretting that he had persecuted Christians and I am sure one of the ones he was thinking about was Stephen.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to trust You more. I want to be like David and keep my trust in You even if people are scheming against me. I also want to be more like Stephen and forgive people and know that You can work things out. Thank You for saving me. Help me to represent You well and help my life to be a witness that will bring others to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday June 28

Scripture Reading: Job 13-15

Acts 8:26-40

Praise the Lord! Psalms 119:86 says, **All Your commands are trustworthy; help me, for men persecute me without cause.** No matter what we face in life, God's Word is always trustworthy! That is true when we face good times and it is true when we face hard times. Our circumstances can and will change but His Word never changes.

When I read the Word, I am amazed at how God's control is revealed. Yesterday, we read about persecution coming against the Church. Because of the persecution, people fled and went to different places. God used that whole process to get the Gospel to more people which was His plan from the very beginning.

In today's reading, we see Philip going and telling an Ethiopian about Jesus. Way back at the end of Matthew Jesus told them this is what they should be doing. Matthew 28:19-20 said, **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.** That was God's plan and it is what we see happening in Acts. Draw confidence from examples of God's control. He loves you and He will take care of you too.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. Thank You for giving me another example of all Your commands being trustworthy. Help me to take this and apply it in my life today. I also want to be a good witness for You today and every day. Help me to live my life in a way that will draw others to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday June 29

Scripture Reading: Job 16-18

Acts 9:1-22

Praise the Lord! Look at what David said in Psalms 119:87, **They almost wiped me from the Earth, but I have not forsaken Your precepts.** David was telling the truth here. His enemies had almost wiped him out, but God saw him through and now David was never going to stop serving Him.

Well, praise God. Saul was saved! He was the biggest persecutor of the Church and now He is going to become one of it's biggest promoters. Don't forget that Stephen had prayed that God would forgive Saul and now Saul is being forgiven. Stephen's prayers were important and your prayers are important too.

Look at Acts 9:3-5, **As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from Heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," He replied.**

Saul was persecuting Christians and yet Jesus said that he was persecuting Him! You see, Jesus knows that He is the head and we are His body on the Earth. When someone persecutes the body (us) they are also persecuting Jesus (the Head).

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You have protected me so many times. I know there have been times when I have recognized Your protection and other times when I have missed it, but it has always been there and I thank You for it. Please help me to stay close to You in everything I do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Saturday June 30

Scripture Reading: Job 19-20

Acts 9:23-43

Praise the Lord! If you have been doing your Scripture Readings every day, you are now half of the way through the whole Bible this year. Congratulation! Keep going. Psalms 119:88 says, **Preserve my life according to Your love, and I will obey the statutes of Your mouth.** Let's be like David and keep living for God!

When Saul turned his life over to Jesus, he was then persecuted. Acts 9:23 says, **After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him.** Now they are trying to kill him just like he used to try to kill other Christians. Do you think this made Saul regret being saved? No way! It was the best decision he had ever made.

Look at verse 31, **Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.** Saul really was a leader in the persecution and now some of it slowed down but it would be back.

When the persecution slowed down, the Christians just kept spreading the Word. They were committed to doing what Jesus wanted and so they continued.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for the things You speak to me as I spend time in Your Word. Please help me to do my part and I know that You will do Your part. I also ask You to bless all my brothers and sisters who are doing these devotions. Help us to be consistent and help us to keep growing in our knowledge of You and the Word. Bless my Pastor today. Help him to be blessed so he can bless us at Church tomorrow. In Jesus' Name, Amen.