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1 January 2012

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Praise the Lord! We have another year to live for Jesus. I am glad you have taken a set of these devotions for 2012. I have laid out the Scripture Readings in a way that will help you to read the whole Bible this year. Stay current and you will be able to make it.

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

Gladly in His Service,

Dr. Jason

Dr. Jason B. Brittain





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Sunday January 1

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 1-2
Matthew 1**

Praise the Lord! We are working our way through the book of Psalms verse by verse. We are ready for Psalms 96:5 **“For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.”** There are idols and there is one real God. Thank God we serve the real God. He is the maker of all things and He is the One who holds all things together. Some people might deny Him but that doesn't deny the truth that our God reigns!

Look at Matthew 1:18 **“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.”** Jesus' birth was totally miraculous. When we open our lives to Him, He miraculously comes into our lives too. Thank God for the new birth. Thank God that Jesus lives in us and we always have His help.

When Mary was found to be pregnant, Joseph was going to put her away but God told him not to do that. Look at Matthew 1:24 **“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.”** Joseph's obedience to God positioned him to see many more wonderful things. It is the same way with us. We need to hear from God and do what He says. Those things will position us to be used by God more and more. Thank God that there is always more for us as God's obedient Children.

Prayer: Lord, I am so glad that I have given my life to You. I know that living for You is the very best life there is and I am never going to pull back from my commitment to You and Your ways. Help me to know Your will for my life and help me to fully do all that You have for me to do. I don't want to miss out on anything You have for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Monday January 2

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 3-5
Matthew 2**

Praise the Lord! Psalms 96:6 **“Splendour and majesty are before Him; strength and glory are in His sanctuary.”** God is the only real God and we are blessed to have Him as our Lord and Savior! Acts 4:12 says, **“Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”** Jesus is the only Name by which people can be saved. Thank God we know that.

Yesterday, I talked to you about hearing what God wants you to do and doing it. Look at John 10:27 **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”** We belong to Jesus and the Word says that we do hear His voice. I want to remind you to never argue with God. He says you hear His voice so agree with Him and then follow Him in whatever He asks you to do.

Now look at Matthew 2:19-21 **“After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.”** God spoke to Joseph, he heard God and did what God told him to do. This is a perfect example of how we should live. When Joseph did this everyone was protected and they ended up being right where God wanted them to be. Thank God that we can live like this too.

Prayer: Lord, I know that You are God and I am glad that I have called upon You for my salvation. I am going to agree with what You said about my hearing Your voice. I know that You always speak the truth and I sure don't want to argue with You. Help me to always obey You and to know that I will be taken care of by You and Your leading. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Tuesday January 3

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 6-8
Matthew 3**

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 96:7 **“Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.”** Do you know what the word “ascribe” here means? It means to give. Now, we know that we don’t give God strength like He didn’t have it before we gave it to Him. This means we should proclaim that He is all powerful and let everyone who hears us know. So, let’s ascribe glory and strength to God.

Let’s start off with Matthew 3:1-3 for today, **“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”**” John the Baptist was doing exactly what God had for him to do. This is how we should live. We should hear from God and then do exactly what He asks us to do. It doesn’t matter whether He asks us to do something big or small. We should obey Him either way.

John the Baptist also baptized Jesus because it was what God wanted. Now look at Matthew 3:16, 17 **“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”**” God’s perfect will was being accomplished as His people did what He wanted them to do.

Prayer: Lord, I choose to ascribe to You glory and strength just like Your Word tells me to do. I am committed to doing what You ask me to do. I know that obeying You is always right and that it will lead to Your will being accomplished, and that is always a good thing. Thank You for speaking to me through Your Word and by Your leading. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Wednesday January 4

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 9-11
Matthew 4**

Praise the Lord! Psalms 96:8 **“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.”** Now we are told to ascribe glory to God and to bring an offering to Him. You see, it is important to honor God with our words and yet knowing Him needs to affect us even more than that. We need to speak of His goodness and we need to be givers. When a person backs up what they say with their giving we can know that they are really meaning the things they say. So, by all means talk about how much you love God and then back it up with your giving.

Jesus is our example. We can learn so much from looking at His life and then we need to do the things He did. In Matthew 4, Jesus was tempted by the devil and He overcame the devil with the Word time after time. Matthew 4:4 says, **“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”**” Jesus overcame the devil with the Word. The Word was His offensive weapon and it should be ours too. Look at Ephesians 6:17 **“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”** The Word is our sword.

I also want you to notice how important the Word is according to Matthew 4:4. Jesus said we live by the Word and not bread alone. The Word should be more important to us than food.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to tell others about You and Your goodness but I also want You to rule and reign in every area of my life. I don't just want to talk about living for You. I want to show it in every area of my life including my giving. Please continue to teach me Your ways from the Word and help me to use the Word to defeat the devil. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Thursday January 5

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12-14
Matthew 5:1-26

Praise the Lord! Psalms 96:9 says, **“Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.”** When we think about how powerful God is it might make us tremble but we know Jesus as our Savior and that changes everything. Look at what Jesus said in John 15:15 **“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”** Jesus calls us friends. Isn’t that amazing? We should still be amazed at God’s power but now we shouldn’t be afraid.

Jesus wants you to be blessed! The word blessed here means to be happy, fortunate and envied by others who aren’t blessed. Listen, since Jesus wants you to be blessed I am sure it is all right for us to want to be blessed too. In the 26 verses we are covering for today Jesus used the word blessed nine times! I counted them for you in case any of you were doubting if Jesus really wanted you to be blessed. He told us these things and promised His blessing so we could know how to be blessed.

Let me give you just one of these nine times. Matthew 5:6 **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”** When you are hungry and thirsty you will do whatever it takes to get your need met. When you are hungry and thirsty for the things of God you will seek Him diligently and He will meet your need and that is being blessed!

Prayer: Lord, thank You for calling me Your friend. I want to live my life like You want. I also want to be blessed like You promise. I don’t want to be selfish. I want to be blessed so I can be a blessing to others. Help me to do my part and I know You will do Your part. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Friday January 6

Scripture Reading: Genesis 15-17
Matthew 5:27-48

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 96:10 for today, **“Say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns.’ The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”** We know that God reigns and this verse tells us to say it. You see, speaking what you believe is important. Look at 2 Corinthians 4:13 **“It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak.”** Believe the right things and speak what you believe in faith. Believe that the Lord reigns and go ahead and speak it in faith.

When Jesus taught about the law He raised the standard so high that no one could be deceived into thinking they could keep it. Let me show you what I mean. Matthew 5:38 says, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’”** This is what the Old Testament law said. Now, look at what Jesus said, Matthew 5:39 **“But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”** He raised the standard even higher.

Why do you think He did this? He did this because He wanted everyone to know that they could not be justified by keeping the law. If we can't keep the law then we need a Savior and that is what Jesus was trying to get everyone to realize.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I want to be more willing to tell people. The more I know Your Word the more I know that Your truth is always right and I want to speak what I believe in faith. I am also so thankful that I know that I need a Savior and I know that You are the only Savior. Thank You for showing me Your ways and for saving me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Saturday January 7

Scripture Reading: Genesis 18-19
Matthew 6

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 96:10 again, **“Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.” The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”** Yesterday, I wrote to you about believing the right things and being willing to say what you believe but I felt like I wanted to spend another day on this verse. We are also told that the world is firmly established and we know that is true because God has done it. You see, the work that God does lasts. That is true for the world and it is true for our lives. Let Him do His work and You will be firmly established too.

Look at the first part of verses 2, 5 and 16. **“When you give. . .” “When you pray. . .” “When you fast. . .”** My first point is this: Jesus assumed we would be doing these things. He didn't say, “If” He said, “When” we do these things. So, since Jesus assumed we would be doing these things, let me ask you about them. Do you give? Do you pray? Do you fast?

Next when you read all this in context you will see that Jesus was telling us that we need to have the right motives for giving, praying and fasting. If we do any of these things as a show or so people can notice then we have missed the mark. We need to do them and we need to do them because God wants us to do them. They are also ways that we can draw near to Him. So give, pray and fast and do them with the right motive.

Prayer: Lord, I am so glad that You are working in my life. I know that Your work lasts and I want to be firmly established in You. Help me to know Your Word and to do it. I also thank You for speaking to me today about giving, praying and fasting. I want to be a doer of Your Word and I always want to live for You with a right motive. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Sunday January 8

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 20-22
Matthew 7**

Praise the Lord! Psalms 96:10-11 say, **“Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.” The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.”** When we know that God reigns everyone and everything should rejoice. Now, I know there are some people who don't rejoice at this news but they should. If they would not rebel against God and submit to Him then they could rejoice with us.

I want to encourage you. You are studying God's Word every day and you have made a good choice. Don't quit and don't get behind. It is hard to catch up. Matthew 7:24 says, **“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”** When we study and learn what the Word says then we need to be sure to do what it says. You see, hearing is good and necessary but it isn't all there is.

Now, look at Matthew 7:28-29 **“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.”** Jesus taught with authority and the people were amazed. The Word of God is mighty. We need to share it and let it amaze people. You really can trust the Word to work in people's lives just like it is working in your life.

Prayer: Lord, I am so glad that I know You reign. I rejoice in this truth. I am glad that I have given my life to You and I am committed to living for You. Please continue speaking Your ways to me and help me to be sure to do what You say. I want the strength and stability that comes from knowing Your Word and doing it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Monday January 9

Scripture Reading: Genesis 23-24
Matthew 8

Praise the Lord! We have been seeing that God reigns and everything should rejoice because of that. Psalms 96:12 says, **“Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy.”** If the fields and the trees worship God we sure should too. When I start all these devotions off by saying, “Praise the Lord!” I hope you really do take a little time and Praise Him. He is always worthy of our praise.

Look at Matthew 8:1-2 **“When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”** This man was not sure Jesus was willing to heal him. I hope you know better than this. It is always Gods’ will to heal. Psalms 103:3 describes God and it says, **“Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.”** All means all. 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.”**

Let’s see if all this lines up with the man who came to Jesus. Matthew 8:3 says, **“Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.”** Jesus was willing and He healed him. If these verses stretch you in your thinking it is a good thing. Line your thinking up with the Word!

Prayer: Lord, I know that I should praise You more and I really do want to do it. Help me to choose to fill my mind with Your Word and then I know it will be easier for me to praise You more. I am also thankful that it is Your will to heal. Help me to renew my mind to the truth of Your Word and never doubt it. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Tuesday January 10

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 25-26
Matthew 9:1-17**

Praise the Lord! Look at the last verse of Psalms 96, **“They will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.”** I don’t know if you have ever thought about praising God because He is going to judge the world but that is what this verse is talking about. Let me remind you that this verse also tells us that He judges the world in righteousness and truth. We can trust Him to always do the right thing and we should always praise Him.

In the first part of our reading for today, a man came to Jesus for healing. Jesus forgave him of his sins and the religious people got all upset. Matthew 9:3-7 **“At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!” Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....”** Then he said to the paralytic, **“Get up, take your mat and go home.”** And the man got up and went home.”

That is a longer section of verses than I usually put in here but I wanted you to see it all. Psalms 103:3 says **“Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.”** Jesus was doing God’s will. He forgave this man and healed him!

Prayer: Lord, I know that You always do the right thing. I know that Your judgement will be done in righteousness and truth. I trust You! I also thank You for forgiving all my sins. Help me to know that You heal all my diseases just like You forgive all my sins. I am going to believe Your Word and renew my mind to it. I want to walk in all that You have for me. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Wednesday January 11

Scripture Reading: Genesis 27-28
Matthew 9:18-38

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97 is another Psalm of praise to God. Psalms 97:1 says, **“The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice.”** God reigns. He is in control. That should make us be glad and it should help us to rejoice. After all we have given our lives to Jesus and He is our Lord and Savior. We belong to Him and He promises to always take care of us. We surely have a lot to be glad about and to rejoice over.

Well, take a look at Matthew 9:22 **“Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed from that moment.”** Did that say her faith healed her? What do you think that meant? Look at Matthew 9:29 **“Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith will it be done to you”.** Did that say they were going to get just what they had faith for? What do you think this meant? Listen, our faith is very important. We need to know what God says and put our faith in God’s Word.

Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38 **“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”** Do you think this is something we should pray for in faith? Well, we should and as we pray in faith we will get what we pray for.

Prayer: Lord, I know that You reign and I am glad and I rejoice. Help me to remember these things when I am going through hard times. I know that You always reign and so I always have things to be glad about and to rejoice over. Help me to live by faith and not by sight. Teach me Your ways and help me to put my faith out for all that You have for me. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Thursday January 12

Scripture Reading: Genesis 29-30
Matthew 10:1-23

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:2 says, “**Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.**” This is a man trying to describe what God looks like on His throne. I don’t know if things look exactly like this or not but I know this God is on His throne and that is good news for us who belong to Him.

Yesterday’s reading ended with the disciples praying for the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. Now, look at Matthew 10:1 “**He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.**” Please don’t miss this point. They prayed in faith and then God used them as a part of the answer to their prayers. It isn’t that unusual for God to do things like this. Here’s an example. I may know of someone who is in need and I pray that God will help them. Then God speaks to me to be one of the ways He helps them. Here’s my point. When you pray, be ready for God to use you if He chooses to.

Look at Matthew 10:7-8 “**As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.**” God was really using them. They were going out to do His will and so they could know that He would help them.

Prayer: Lord, I am so glad that You are on Your throne and ruling and reigning. I have such confidence because I know You are my Lord and Savior. Help me to pray in faith believing that You will answer and help me to be ready to be used by You more. I know that I need to be faithful right now and that will position me to be used more. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Friday January 13

Scripture Reading: Genesis 31-32
Matthew 10:24-42

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97 is describing God's greatness and Psalms 97:3 says, "**Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side.**" This kind of sounds like God's enemies are no problem for Him to handle. We need to stay close to God and then He will always take care of us as well. We don't have anything to fear because we are on His side and He loves us.

Look at Matthew 10:29-30 "**Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.**" God loves us and He always takes care of us. This verse says that He even knows the number of hairs on our head. If He knows that much about us then surely He knows our needs and He will always help us. I know someone reading this right now needs this reminder and I hope you will accept it as God speaking to you personally today because He is.

Matthew 10:42 says, "**And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.**" God even sees everything we do. When we do good to help someone God sees it and He promises to reward us. Don't worry if people don't see what you do. We should be more interested in pleasing God than anything else and He always sees and He always rewards.

Prayer: Lord, I know that You are all powerful and that Your enemies are no problem for You. I want to stay close to You and live like You want. I know that You always protect me and I am so thankful. You know all about me and You still love me. Help me to have a greater revelation of Your love and help it to really affect my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Saturday January 14

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 33-35
Matthew 11**

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:4 says, **“His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles.”** Have you ever watched a lightning storm and were amazed at the power being displayed? Well this verse says the lightning is His lightning. You see, everything was created by God and it all belongs to Him. Thank God that we belong to Him as well.

Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 11:11 **“I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”** This was a huge compliment to John the Baptist and an even greater compliment to us. John was greater than anyone born before him. He was greater than Moses, David and even Elijah. Then Jesus said that we are greater than John! Take a little time and really think about that because it is significant.

Matthew 11:28-30 say, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** We can always draw near to Jesus when we need help. There are times when we feel weary and burdened and Jesus is inviting us to come to Him and find rest. You see, there is a rest that Jesus can give us that can't be found any other way.

Prayer: Lord, I am amazed at Your power and yet You are so gentle with people. Thank You for seeking and saving me when I was totally lost. Help me to know more of what You have provided for me because I have Jesus in my life. I also want to be quicker to run to You when I need help. I know that You are always there and I love You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Sunday January 15

Scripture Reading: Genesis 36-37
Matthew 12:1-21

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:5 says, **“The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.”** The Lord is Lord of all the earth. Do you think this includes nations who reject God and don’t want Him being Lord over them? Of course it includes them. Lord over ALL means Lord over ALL. Thank God that we have willingly submitted to His Lordship.

In Matthew 12, a man with a withered hand came to Jesus for healing. Look at Matthew 12:13 **“Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.”** Praise the Lord! This was sure a good thing. Acts 10:38 says, **“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.”** Jesus was just setting this man free from the devil and his work. Wouldn’t you think everyone would be happy with this miracle? Well, keep reading.

Matthew 12:14 **“But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.”** This is the very next verse. That means these Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus because He had healed this man. You see, they thought Jesus shouldn’t have done this on the Sabbath but they didn’t get him healed on other days. We will see that one of their problems was that they were jealous of Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, I know that You are Lord of all things. I am glad that I have willingly submitted to Your Lordship and that is one of the best decisions I have ever made. Help me to live more like You want. I also thank You for showing me Your ways through the Word. Help me to know that it is always the right day to help people. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Monday January 16

Scripture Reading: Genesis 38-40
Matthew 12:22-50

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:6 says, **“The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.”** This verse talks about God’s righteousness and His glory. Thank God that He is righteous and He even shares His righteousness with us. 2 Corinthians 5:21 **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** Thank God and accept what He has done for you.

Look at Matthew 12:24 **“But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”** This doesn’t even make sense. If the devil was possessing someone why would he drive himself out? Can you see how far these guys were going to try to discredit Jesus? Listen, Jesus is good and He only does good things. Remember that and it will help you to sort many things out.

Now look at Matthew 12:49-50 **“Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”** Whoever does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother! Do you do God’s will? If you do then you are Jesus’ relative. Isn’t that amazing? We are in God’s family because we have accepted Jesus into our lives and now we are adopted into His family and we do God’s will. Thank God.

Prayer: Lord, I know that You are righteous and it is amazing that You have made me righteous. Help me to grasp this more and help me to live like a righteous Christian should live. I also thank You for revealing Your ways to me. Help me to do them and to show that I really do belong to You. I love You and I love Your people. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Tuesday January 17

Scripture Reading: Genesis 41
Matthew 13:1-32

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 97:7 **“All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols--worship him, all you gods!”** There is only one God. All idols may be called gods but they are not God! Those who worship idols will be put to shame but look at Isaiah 50:7 **“Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.”** Let God help you and you will not be put to shame!

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells a whole lot of parables about the Kingdom of God. Look at what He said about the parable of the sower and the seed. Matthew 13:11 **“He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.”** We are so blessed. This is an important thing for you to renew your mind to. God is not hiding His ways from you. He wants you to know His ways and so He has given us the Word so we can learn.

Matthew 13:23 **“But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”** Here is a truth God wants you to know. We need to know the Word and hold on to it. When we do that the Word can and will produce in our lives. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Lord, I thank You that You have taught me to put my hope and trust in You. I know that You will never let me down and I am confident that You are going to continue to work in my life. Help me to know Your Word and help me to never quit on what You have spoken to me. I want Your Word to produce in my life. I am never going to quit! In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Wednesday January 18

Scripture Reading: Genesis 42-43
Matthew 13:33-58

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:8 says, **“Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, O LORD.”** Zion refers to the people of God. I am going to spend two days on this because it deserves it. First of all, God’s people hear! Did you see that in this verse? If we don’t hear what God is saying then we will miss out on His leading and we will miss out on things that should cause us to rejoice and be glad. So, keep listening to God. He is speaking to you. He may even speak to you through these devotions.

Matthew 13:33 **“He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”** This is a short parable but we still need to learn from it. In this parable, Jesus said the Kingdom is like yeast that is mixed with dough. When you mix yeast and dough the yeast grows and expands until it affects every part of the dough. The Kingdom should be growing and expanding in our lives until it affects every area of our lives too.

Matthew 13:44 **“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”** This is another short parable but again there is a lot for us to see. This parable shows that the Kingdom is of great value and we should treasure it so much that we would do anything necessary for us to have Jesus’s Kingdom and His Lordship in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, I want to hear everything You are speaking to me. I know that You are always speaking and I ask You to help me to hear. I also want to value Your Kingdom more and I want to do whatever I need to do to let You rule and reign in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



Thursday January 19

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 44-45
Matthew 14:1-21**

Praise the Lord! I said I wanted to spend two days on Psalms 97:8 so here we go. **“Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, O LORD.”** Yesterday, we talked about our need to hear and this verse tells us what hearing should produce in our lives. We should rejoice and be glad when God speaks to us. Thank God that we know He loves us and He always speaks Good News to us. Even if God is telling us that some people will be judged it is Good News to us because we are free from judgement and we know that God will be fair and just in whatever He does.

Herod was being motivated by the devil and he arrested John the Baptist and put him to death. Look at John 10:10 **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”** The devil steals, kills and destroys and Herod was doing what the devil wanted him to do.

When Jesus heard what had happened he wanted to get away to be alone but people found Him and they were in need. So, Jesus met their needs. He was actually striking back at the devil. Jesus healed the sick. Acts 10:38 **“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.”** Jesus knew that the devil was His real enemy and we need to remember that too.

Prayer: Lord, I know that Your speaking to me is always Good News and I want to stay receptive to everything You want to speak to me. I also thank You that I know You only come to give life. Help me to keep my life open to You and closed to the devil. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Friday January 20

Scripture Reading: Genesis 46-48
Matthew 14:22-36

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:9 says, **“For you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.”** We have seen this before but we really need to settle it in our lives. Other so called gods are not God! We serve the only real and living God. All other gods are only idols and they have no real power. Our God is all powerful and He is looking out for us. We are blessed!

In our reading for today, the disciples were in a boat and there was a huge storm. The disciples were about to sink when Jesus showed up. Look at Matthew 14:27 **“But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”** I bet they were sure glad to hear from Jesus. Let me remind you again that any time God speaks to us it is Good News. Jesus told them to **“Take courage and to not be afraid!”** Listen we can only do these things when we are relying on Jesus. We have Jesus in our lives so we can have courage and we can reject fear.

When Jesus got them to the other side, people showed up and He helped them. Matthew 14:35, 36 **“And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.”** Thank God that Jesus has never changed. He still meets the needs of people just like you and me.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that I have given my life to You. I know that You are the only real God and I love You. Please help me to know how wonderful it is to have You in my life. I want to be a person of courage and I want to reject fear because of You and Your work in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Saturday January 21

Scripture Reading: Genesis 49-50
Matthew 15:1-20

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:10 says, **“Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”** Do you love the Lord? Well then you should hate evil. You see, God and evil are total opposites. We can’t love God and still tolerate what He hates. So, love God and hate evil! I will have more to say on this verse tomorrow.

Matthew 15:3 **“Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”** These people were making a tragic mistake. They were making the traditions of man more important than the Word. Listen, the Word is always right and we need to change other things to line up with the Word.

Look at Matthew 15:7-9 **“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”** Because these people were not living according to the Word they were off track and it affected everything. Even their worship was in vain. After all, how could anyone know how to worship if they didn’t learn it from the Word. We need to let the Word be the final authority in every area of our lives and then we won’t get off track.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I hate what You hate. I know this doesn't mean that I hate people but I do hate the evil that they do. I also hate the devil who motivates people to evil. Help me to know how to live in balance. I know that I need Your Word. Help me to know if there are any areas in my life where I am not letting Your Word be the final authority. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Sunday January 22

Scripture Reading: Exodus 1-3
Matthew 15:21-39

Praise the Lord! I want us to look at a little more from Psalms 97:10 **“Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”** When we love God and hate evil we will know that it is God who guards our lives and delivers us from the devil. When people don't love God and hate evil they often get confused in these things. Look at 1 Corinthians 14:33 out of the RSV, **“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints.”** Confusion doesn't come from God. He can help us to know the truth that sets us free.

Jesus was the Healer and He is still the Healer today. Hebrews 13:8 **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.”** It is so vital that we believe this. Now, look at Matthew 15:28, **“Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.”** Jesus was the Healer and this woman had faith. When her faith and Jesus got together the daughter was healed!

Matthew 15:30 says, **“Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them.”** How many people do you think there were in these 'great crowds'? Well, Jesus, the Healer, healed them all!

Prayer: Lord, I thank You that confusion never comes from You. You are the One who can help me to know the truth so I am not confused. I choose to believe You and Your Word. I also thank You for teaching me that You are the Healer and You will always be my Healer. I know that everything You teach me is important but I sure like this. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Monday January 23

Scripture Reading: Exodus 4-6
Matthew 16

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 97:11, **“Light is shed upon the righteous and joy on the upright in heart.”** Don’t forget that you are righteous and so this is written to you. In case you forgot that you are righteous, look at 2 Corinthians 5:21, **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** You are righteous because God has made you righteous. Now let God shine His light upon you and let Him give you joy.

Look at Matthew 16:15-17 **“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”** Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ because God had revealed it to him. We have all been through a similar experience to this. Haven’t you been asked how you know that God is really God? It is sometimes hard to explain but we just know because we know. Actually we know because God has revealed it to us.

Look at Matthew 16:21 **“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”** There are a lot of things I could say about this but notice that the revelation they had received before this positioned them to receive even more of what God was saying.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for all that You are doing in my life and all that You are teaching me. I want to always accept everything You are doing. I love You so much. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



Tuesday January 24

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 7-8
Matthew 17**

Praise the Lord! Look at the last verse of Psalms 97, **“Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.”** Yesterday, we talked about our being righteous because God makes us righteous. Today we are told to rejoice and to praise God. Listen, when we realize how much God has done for us, like making us righteous, it should be easy for us to rejoice and to praise Him. He is so wonderful and His love is so great.

Look at Matthew 17:18 **“Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.”** If you want to read the whole story here go back and read this verse in context but I wanted to say something about this verse. In this case, the sickness was caused by a demon. Not all sickness is caused by demons but some is. Here’s the Good News, Jesus is the answer to both problems. He is the Healer and He is the Deliverer. Thank God we have given our lives to Him.

Now look at Matthew 17:22-23 **“When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.” And the disciples were filled with grief.”** These disciples were filled with grief. Did they miss the part about Jesus being raised from the dead? That should have given them hope!

Prayer: Lord, I am amazed at all that You have done for me. I want to rejoice and have all the joy that You have for me. I know that everything You bring into my life is good. I also thank You for being my Healer and my Deliverer. I want to walk in all the freedom You have for me. I know that You are alive because I know You are working in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Wednesday January 25

Scripture Reading: Exodus 9-10
Matthew 18:1-20

Praise the Lord! We have sure been seeing that many of the Psalms were praise to God and Psalms 98 is also like this. Psalms 98:1 **“Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.”** Hasn't God done marvellous things in your life? Well then sing praises to Him. Hasn't God worked salvation in your life? Well then sing praises to Him.

Matthew 18:1-4 **“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”** God's Kingdom is not like the kingdoms of the world. God is looking for people who are humble and who will serve others. That is how we are like Jesus.

Matthew 18:20 **“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”** God also always blesses unity. When we are humble enough to pray in agreement with each other God blesses our unity. Aren't you glad that God is not hiding His ways from you? He is showing you some important things because He loves you.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful for all the marvelous things You have done in my life. I am especially thankful for Your saving me. I want to praise You for all Your goodness. Help me to be humble and help me to pray in agreement with my brothers and sisters. I know they are blessings in my life and I want to be a greater blessing to them. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Thursday January 26

Scripture Reading: Exodus 11-12
Matthew 18:21-35

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 98:2 **“The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.”** Oh please notice that this verse says that God has MADE His salvation KNOWN and He has REVEALED His righteousness. This goes right along with my point that God is not hiding His ways from us. He makes things KNOWN and He REVEALS His ways to us. Thank God!

Look at Matthew 18:21-22 **“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”** God always wants us to forgive people. I know some people argue this but it is still what God wants. Think about this. We are being conformed to the image of Jesus and He even forgave the people who were crucifying Him.

After these verses, Jesus told a parable about a man who wouldn't forgive others and then he ended up being punished for his sins. Now look at Matthew 18:35 **“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”** If this sounds serious it is because it is serious. We need to forgive others. As we sow forgiveness we will reap forgiveness. If we sow unforgiveness then we will reap unforgiveness.

Prayer: Lord, I am so thankful that You make Your ways known to me and that You reveal how I should live and forgive. I know that You want me to forgive people and I want to do what You want. Help me to know that You showing me these things really is Good News. I don't want to hold others in bondage with my unforgiveness and I want to be free too. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Friday January 27

Scripture Reading: Exodus 13-15
Matthew 19:1-15

Praise the Lord! Look at Psalms 98:3 **“He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”** Listen we need to remember God’s love and His faithfulness but that isn’t what this verse is talking about. It says that God remembers His love and His faithfulness. We may forget His love and His faithfulness but He will never forget them. Thank God!

Matthew 19:1-2 **“When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.”** Some people might think I talk about healing on here too much but I am just reminding you of what Jesus did. He went about healing and doing good all through His ministry. Thank God He has never changed and He never will.

Look at Matthew 19:13-15 **“Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.”** Jesus was also always blessing people. In this case, the disciples thought Jesus was too busy to bless the children but He wasn’t. Thank God He has never changed and He never will.

Prayer: Lord, I am thankful that You remember Your love and faithfulness and I want to remember them more too. I am also thankful that You are the Healer and that You always bless people when they come to You in faith. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Saturday January 28

Scripture Reading: Exodus 16-18
Matthew 19:16-30

Praise the Lord! Psalms 98:4 **“Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music.”** I have written to you about shouting to the Lord before and I want to remind you that it is a blessing. I have actually practiced this at times and I have always found that doing what God asks me to do is a good thing. One time I was in my car alone and God’s goodness seemed so real that I just shouted that I loved Him. I was alone but I think the person in the car next to me didn’t quite understand but it was still a good thing.

Look at Matthew 19:21-22 **“Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.”** This man’s problem was not his wealth but rather the fact that he had his trust and confidence in his wealth. He should have had his trust and confidence in God.

Look at Matthew 19:29 **“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”** Didn’t Jesus ask this rich young man to give up everything and follow Him? This verse says that he would have gotten a hundred times as much if he had done that. This sure makes me want to keep my trust and confidence in God and it makes me want to live for Him.

Prayer: Lord, I love You and I don’t want to be shy about letting it show. Help me to represent You well all the time. I also thank You that I have put my trust and confidence in You and I am never going to quit. Help me to remember this commitment if I ever waver. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



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Sunday January 29

Scripture Reading: Exodus 19-21
Matthew 20:1-16

Praise the Lord! Psalms 98:5 **“Make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing.”** I just saw a commercial where a guy said something was the best decision he had ever made. I want you to know that accepting Jesus into my life is the best decision I ever made and so it is easy for me to praise Him and worship Him. By the way, that guy was talking about a bed he had bought. I think my decision is better now and I am sure it will be better for all eternity.

Matthew 20:1-2 say, **“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.”** This parable goes on to say that the owner hired people all day long and when the day was over he paid those who worked the shortest the same as those who worked the longest. This is really a picture of people going to heaven. Those who get saved on their death bed get the same heavenly reward as those who have lived for the Lord for a long time. Listen, I am just glad we are going to heaven and I am glad that I have lived for Him as long as I have. I wouldn't want to have lived a sinners life any longer. I had enough of that. How about you?

Let me say one more thing about this quickly. The difference between heaven and hell is Jesus and we should be very thankful that is the way it is. I am so thankful for heaven and I just want more people to make it there.

Prayer: Lord, I am so glad that I have given my life to You. I wish I had done it sooner and I am never going to turn away from You. Help me to let others know that they can be born again too and help my life to line up with that I say I believe. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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Monday January 30

Scripture Reading: Exodus 22-24
Matthew 20:17-34

Praise the Lord! Psalms 98:6 **“With trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn--shout for joy before the LORD, the King.”** We should use whatever we have to praise the Lord! We should use instruments and even our own bodies. The Word tells us to shout, clap, dance and sing. The point is we should praise the Lord! After all He is and He always will be worthy.

Look at Matthew 20:29-30, **“As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”** These two blind men were making a good choice. They wanted to be healed and they were calling out to Jesus.

Now look at Matthew 20:31 **“The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”** The crowd actually rebuked them but they would not be deterred. They wanted Jesus to heal them and they were not going to quit. Matthew 20:32-34 **“Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.”** Jesus healed them. Thank God. We need to be as determined as they were when we want something from Jesus. That is faith being put into action.

Prayer: Lord, I know that You are always worthy of my praise and I want to give it to You more consistently. I am also determined to be a person of faith. I know that believing in You and never quitting is what helped these two blind men and I want to learn from them. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



Tuesday January 31

Scripture Reading: Exodus 25-26
Matthew 21:1-22

Praise the Lord! Psalms 97:7 says, **“All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols--worship Him, all you gods!”** We should not worship idols or images. We should worship the real and living God. We know that He has revealed Himself to us in Jesus. Hebrews 1:1-2 say, **“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”**

Jesus went into Jerusalem to die for the sins of the whole world. No one else knew this purpose but He did and He was committed to doing all of God's will for His life. For Him it meant a horrific death on the cross but He was willing to do God's will because He came to do God's will and because He knew there was joy coming. I hope you know God's will for your life. Then I hope you are committed to doing what He wants. Believe me if you have to go through some hardship along the way it will be worth it because you will have pleased God and You will make it to the joy that follows. Think about this. You are being like Jesus!

Look at Matthew 21:14 **“The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.”** Jesus was still healing people. With all that He was facing He could have been focused on himself and the things He was going through but He was still ministering to others and meeting their needs. Thank God that we have given our lives to Jesus. Like I said a couple of days ago, it was the best decision we ever made!

Prayer: Lord, Thank You for showing me that You are always willing to meet people's needs. Help me to be more like this. I don't want to be so self centered that I miss the needs of others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.