

P52

2019
WEEKLY BIBLE READING PROGRAM



**PENTECOSTALS
OF BILLINGS**

where miracles still happen

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Foreword

P52 stands for Process 52- *a focus for every week of the year on daily bible reading and study*. Just as we see God's processes continuously at work throughout the Bible, this is the process we use to get into the Word of God and allow it to get into us. Jesus said in John 8:31 – *"If you continue(abide) in my word, then are you my disciples indeed"*.

Look at this compilation as your guide for "abiding" in God's Word and becoming a disciple of Jesus. Instead of trying to hurriedly read a set number of different chapters from the Bible every day, we encourage you to read the same chapter for a week with the rest of the church. Some chapters are from the Old Testament and some are from the New Testament. In some chapters there are capital letters in the middle of a line, and that is where lines have been combined from the Scripture to utilize the space and make it easier to read. All the readings are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV). You will read the specified chapter every day for seven days. The attention is on the *quality* of your reading rather than the *quantity* or the number of chapters you can read in a year's time. Often the midweek bible study will reinforce your daily reading and study, and you will find that you understand more as you read the same chapter repeatedly. At the back of the book there is also an example and a template to help you apply the Word even more.

There is something powerful about staying in the Word of God on a consistent basis. It is not meant just to inform you, but to transform you. God never meant for Bible study to simply increase our knowledge. Reading, researching, remembering, and reflecting on the Bible is useless if we fail to put God's Word into practice. James says if we want our lives to be blessed by God we must become *"doers of the word"* (James 1:22-25).

Jesus says both knowing and applying the Word creates the foundation for our lives: *"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock"* (Matthew 7:24 NIV). There is no doubt God can do things instantly and suddenly, but the growth of your spiritual maturity is not an instant and sudden act of God. God has never taken a short cut in the spiritual expansion of His followers. It takes time, effort, sweat, and PROCESS to become a fully devoted Christ-follower – a disciple.

Remember the main intent of this guide is to help you to become more like Jesus by getting you involved in the process of meeting with Him and His Word daily.

As you commit yourself to spending time in God's Word and in His presence, you will begin to reflect on who He is and become a fully functioning disciple. Let the process continue! Join us as we discover the wonderful things God has for us throughout this year!

JANUARY 6-12 – THE TRUE VINE

“You are the branch. You need be nothing more. You need not for one single moment of the day take upon you the responsibility of the Vine. You need not leave the place of entire dependence and unbounded confidence.” - *Andrew Murray*

Overview: This is the seventh and last of the “I AM” statements of Christ recorded in the Gospel of John. However, Jesus did not stop with this image, but went on to use the picture of “the friend.” These two pictures of the believer—branches and friends—reveal both our privileges and our responsibilities. As *branches*, we have the privilege of sharing His life, and the responsibility of abiding. As *friends*, we have the privilege of knowing His will, and the responsibility of obeying. This study began in the vineyard and ended in the throne room! If we are not abiding as branches and obeying as friends, we will never be able to face the opposition of the world. If we do not love one another, how can we ever hope to love lost men and women in the world? If we are not marching together as the friends of the King, we will never present a united front to the enemy.

We are not simply handicapped or hindered. We are hopelessly paralyzed! We can do *nothing*! But if we abide in Him, if we stay close to the throne, we can do *anything* that He commands us to do! What a privilege—and what a responsibility!

Focus verse: 5 - *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

John 15

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

The Relationship of Believers to Each Other

¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know

what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another.

The Relationship of Believers to the World

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵ But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘*They hated Me without a cause.*’

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Confession: I am thankful for the promise of the Spirit! I will not allow any ill thoughts from those that may not understand me to cause me to forget who I am and whose I am.

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

() Sunday () Monday () Tuesday () Wednesday () Thursday () Friday () Saturday

JANUARY 13-19 – THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

The Christian has put on the whole armor of God, he is filled with the strength and the power, and he has fought the battle in the evil day. Then having done all, he is tempted to take off his armor. “I have gained the victory,” he says, “all is well.” Then, taking off his armor, he lies down on his bed. “No,” says the apostle, having done all—to stand!” Go on standing. You are always on duty in the Christian life, you can never relax. There is no such thing as a holiday in the spiritual realm. – Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Overview: Here Paul begins by urging believers to be in harmony with their own family. Children were urged to follow the commandment of obeying their parents in the Lord, and fathers were to bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. Many of the households in the first few centuries had servants. As a result, Paul addressed this topic frequently in his letters. He always instructed servants to be obedient to their masters and to do the will of God from their hearts. Paul also told the masters to treat their servants with respect. He warned against threatening them because those earthly masters also have a Master in Heaven who is watching them.

Paul urged the church at Ephesus to put on the whole armor of God in order to stand strong against the deceptions of the devil. He also stressed the need for believers to adorn themselves with elements like prayer, the Gospel, salvation, righteousness and God’s mighty Word. He said to pray for each other to give strength against the evil deeds of the world. Paul closes his letter to the Ephesians by saying he was sending a helper named Tychicus to them. He would give them a report about what Paul was doing. He ends the epistle with a prayer for them to receive faith, peace, and grace for everyone who love Jesus.

Focus verse: 12- *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Ephesians 6

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² *“Honor your father and mother,”* which is the first commandment with promise: ³ *“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* ⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Bondservants and Masters

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

A Gracious Greeting

²¹ But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; ²² whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts.

²³ Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Confession: *Lord, Your Word says that You will never leave me or forsake me, but there are times that I feel that You have. I have also felt that my best efforts to do the right thing have backfired. Today I refuse to live by my feelings or accept what things 'look like'. In the name of Jesus, I resist every feeling of rejection and loneliness. I rejoice in Your acceptance of me, even as I seek to accept and reach out to others. I am wrestling!*

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

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JANUARY 20-26 – IT WAS WORTH IT ALL

“It wasn’t raining when Noah built the ark.”

Overview: Noah's faith influenced his practice. His fear moved him to prepare an ark. His faith set him to work in earnest. (Matthew Henry Commentary)

The intermarriages between believers in God with nonbelievers produced a debased society. God condemned mankind's continual depravity and decreed a catastrophic flood to destroy all life on earth. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God promised to deliver Noah and his family by providing blueprints of a massive, three-story ark with stalls. Before the promised deliverance occurred, the family faced difficult challenges.

Physical Challenge: Using manual labor and primitive tools, a suitable construction site had to be cleared. Gopher trees chopped, planed and fitted together. Bitumen mined and processed into pitch to cover the ark's 1,518,750 cubic feet. For all aboard the ship, countless steps gathered enough food to last for 382 days. The provisions transported and loaded into the boat.

Mental Challenge: The endless hard work and long days invited mental fatigue. The repetitive, tedious building and preparations made the family susceptible to burnout.

Spiritual Challenge: Temptation to alter God's blueprints may have entered the minds of the small crew. Temptation may have tried to discourage them to quit.

Noah's "neighbors would ridicule him for his credulity, and he would be the song of the drunkards; his building would be called 'Noah's folly'." (Matthew Henry Commentary) Through it all Noah remained faithful to God. The challenges had passed and the promised deliverance had come. The Lord rewarded Noah and his family a new beginning.

Focus verse:

22 - Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Genesis 6

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." ⁴ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah Pleases God

⁹ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

The Ark Prepared

¹³ And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵ And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it *with* lower, second, and third *decks*. ¹⁷ And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which *is* the breath of life; everything that *is* on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every *sort* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive. ²¹ And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather *it* to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them."

²² Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Confession: Lord, thank you for the promise You have given me. Until it comes to pass, I pray for strength and wisdom to overcome my difficulties and to remain faithful to You.

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

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JANUARY 27- FEBRUARY 2 – THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT!

“Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.” - Isaiah 44:6

Overview: In this chapter we find the classic expression of the oneness of God. In verse 5, God followed the announcement of the preceding verse with a command that requires total belief in and love for Him as the one and only God. Notice the importance that God attaches to Deuteronomy 6:4-5. He commands that these verses be placed in the heart (verse 6), taught to the children throughout the day (verse 7), bound on the hand and Throughout the chapter, Moses exhorts Israel to hear God and keep His commandments. The responsibility for passing on truth lies with the parents in the home, and all else is secondary to putting God first in our lives.

Focus verse: 4 - “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

Deuteronomy 6

“Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’

⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Caution Against Disobedience

¹⁰ “So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, ¹¹ houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—¹² then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹³ You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. ¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you ¹⁵ (for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

¹⁶ “You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah. ¹⁷ You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. ¹⁸ And you shall do *what is* right and good in the sight of the

LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, ¹⁹ to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

²⁰ “When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’

²¹ then you shall say to your son: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; ²² and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. ²³ Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. ²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day. ²⁵ Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.’

Confession: *Lord, let my worship be singular, and to You alone! I pray that my conduct and priorities will make it obvious who I serve, and that I will be able to explain to those in my life the meaning and significance of all that my great God has done in my life!*

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

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FEBRUARY 3- 9 – CALLED TO BE A CHRISTIAN

“Isn't it interesting that in Acts 11, at the end of verse 26, it says, 'The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.' What I find interesting is the simple thought that the Christians didn't name themselves. But rather, they were called (or named) 'Christians' by those watching their lives. I wonder if it would be the same today. Could someone look at your life or look at my life and name me a Christian? A humbling thought for sure.” – Chris Tomlin

Overview: Chapter 11 is divided into two principal sections. The first (vv. 1–18) summarizes what has been related in the preceding chapter. By including Peter's account of what happened, Luke is able to emphasize again the importance of this event for the history of the church. In a sense, however, this first section also acts as a transition to what follows, namely, the spread of the church among the Gentiles. The second section (vv. 19–30) echoes the theme of earlier persecutions (5:17–41; 6:8–15; 8:1–3), and Luke can again emphasize the spread of the church as the result of persecution. This section also reintroduces Saul and gives further background information, as well as relating the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem as a means of providing help for the believers in Judea, something which Saul did on several occasions, as related later in Acts.

Focus verse: 9 - *But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.'*

Acts 11

Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. ² And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, ³ saying, “You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!”

⁴ But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. ⁶ When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ⁷ And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸ But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ ⁹ But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ ¹⁰ Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹ At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³ And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ¹⁴ who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He* gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”

¹⁸When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

Barnabas and Saul at Antioch

¹⁹Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. ²⁰But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

²²Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. ²³When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. ²⁴For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. ²⁶And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Relief to Judea

²⁷And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. ²⁹Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. ³⁰This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Confession: Thank you God for the change you have brought into my life! I pray that it is a visible change today. May it be that if I am put on trial for being a Christian, there will be enough evidence to convict me.

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

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FEBRUARY 10-16 – LOVE IS THE GREATEST

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Overview: Here Paul explains the right way to exercise all spiritual gifts. Higher than all the gifts of the Spirit is the grace of heavenly love. Paul declared that even the most spectacular manifestations of the gifts, even tongues or prophecy, mean nothing unless motivated by love. Christians may be talented, gifted, devoted, generous in their giving, or endowed with mountain-moving faith; but it is of no value if love is not present.

Spiritual gifts have their place for a time, but love endures forever. Above all else love is the one thing needful. Faith, hope, and love form a heavenly triad of spiritual graces that endure forever, but “the greatest of these is love”.

Focus verse: 8 – Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away

1 Corinthians 13

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

⁴ Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

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FEBRUARY 17-23 –THERE IS A WAY BACK

Overview:

- I. RUTH RENOUNCING (1:1–22)
 - A. **The famine** (1:1–2): An Israelite family (Elimelech; his wife, Naomi; and their two sons) leave their home in Bethlehem to escape a famine and move to Moab.
 - B. **The funerals** (1:3–5): Elimelech dies, and his sons marry Moabite women. Ten years later the sons die, and now Naomi and her daughters-in-law are widows.
 - C. **The farewells** (1:6–15)
 - 1. *Naomi's decision* (1:6–7): Hearing that there is abundant food in Bethlehem, Naomi determines to return to her homeland. Both her daughters-in-law begin the journey with her.
 - 2. *Naomi's despair* (1:8–15): A bitter and broken Naomi gently urges her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to Moab and begin new lives. Orpah does, but Ruth stays with Naomi.
 - D. **The faith** (1:16–18): Ruth vows to accompany her mother-in-law and makes Naomi's God her God.
 - E. **The frustration** (1:19–22): Arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi tells her old friends not to call her Naomi, meaning "pleasant," but to call her Mara, meaning "bitter."
- from the Outline Bible

Focus verse: 16 - *But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God."*

Ruth 1

Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ² The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. ³ Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. ⁴ Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. ⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Naomi Returns with Ruth

⁶ Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. ⁷ Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸ And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰ And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

¹¹ But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? ¹² Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, *if* I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, ¹³ would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

¹⁶ But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people *shall be* my people, And your God, my God.

¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried.

The LORD do so to me, and more also, If *anything but* death parts you and me."

¹⁸ When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

¹⁹ Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

²⁰ But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

²² So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Confession: *Lord, I believe that you are still looking for men and women like Ruth. I desire character and courage to trust you when it seems all hope is lost.*

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

()Sunday ()Monday ()Tuesday ()Wednesday ()Thursday ()Friday ()Saturday

FEBRUARY 24-MARCH 2 – THE DIVINE “LUCK” OF THE RIGHTEOUS

**“Ruth was led to the field where Boaz was.
Nothing just happens.” - Jenny Williams**

Overview:

II. RUTH REAPING (2:1–23)

- A. **The mission of Ruth** (2:1–2): Ruth volunteers to glean the leftover grain from the fields of some kindly farmer so she and Naomi have food to eat.
- B. **The meeting with Boaz** (2:3–17)
 - 1. *His encounter with Ruth* (2:3–13)
 - a. The circumstances (2:3–7): As Ruth sets out to gather grain, she selects a field belonging to a wealthy man named Boaz. Boaz arrives and inquires about Ruth.
 - b. The conversation (3:8–13): Boaz tells her to stay in his field and praises Ruth for her kindness to Naomi.
 - 2. *His encouragement to Ruth* (2:14–17)
 - a. The invitation (2:14) : Boaz invites Ruth to eat from the food he has provided for his harvesters.
 - b. The instructions (2:15–17): Boaz instructs his workers to leave ample heads of barley in the field for Ruth!
- C. **The marveling of Naomi** (2:18–23): Upon returning home, Ruth tells Naomi about Boaz’s kindness. Naomi blesses Boaz and tells Ruth that he is a close relative (who can marry her).

Focus verse: 10 - So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?”

Ruth 2

There was a relative of Naomi’s husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name *was* Boaz. ² So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor.”

And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.”

³ Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.

⁴ Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The LORD *be* with you!”

And they answered him, “The LORD bless you!”

⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman *is* this?”

⁶ So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It *is* the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. ⁷ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, “You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. ⁹ Let your eyes *be* on

the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.”

¹⁰ So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?”

¹¹ And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. ¹² The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

¹³ Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

¹⁴ Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, “Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched *grain* to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. ¹⁵ And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶ Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸ Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

¹⁹ And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.”

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz.”

²⁰ Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.”

²¹ Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’ ”

²² And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “*It is* good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field.” ²³ So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

()Sunday ()Monday ()Tuesday ()Wednesday ()Thursday ()Friday ()Saturday

MARCH 3-9 – THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE

“We have known since the minute Ruth stepped foot into Boaz’s field that the hand of God has been directing Ruth and putting these two together. And, as a picture of Christ’s relationship to His bride, the story of Ruth and Boaz romance holds great meaning to the Church today. We have shown that the very things that Boaz found attractive in Ruth are the qualities that Jesus Christ is looking for in His bride. Should we be surprised to learn that the way Ruth made herself available to Boaz speaks to the Church also?”

- Nevin Bass

Overview:

III. RUTH RESTING (3:1–18)

- A. **The plan** (3:1–5): Desiring to provide a home for Ruth, Naomi gives Ruth instructions for presenting herself as a potential spouse for Boaz. She sends Ruth to find Boaz at the threshing floor. Ruth is to wait until Boaz finishes his meal and lies down, and then she is to lie at his feet.
- B. **The proposal** (3:6–9): In the middle of the night a startled Boaz awakes to find Ruth lying at his feet! She then asks him to perform his duties as her family redeemer.
- C. **The problem** (3:10–13): Boaz explains to Ruth that there is another man more closely related to her than he is. If that relative won’t marry Ruth, he will.
- D. **The precaution** (3:14) : Boaz requests that Ruth stay until dawn and secretly leave, lest her mission be misinterpreted by witnesses.
- E. **The provision** (3:15–17): Boaz sends Ruth home with six measures of barley.
- F. **The persistence** (3:18): Naomi reassures Ruth that Boaz will not rest until he has followed through concerning her request.

Focus verse: 18 – Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”

Ruth 3

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? ² Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³ Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”

⁵ And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. ⁷ And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

⁸ Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ And he said, “Who *are* you?”

MARCH 10-16 – THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” – *Ephesians 1:13-14*

Overview:

IV. RUTH RECEIVING (4:1–22)

- A. **The summons** (4:1–6): At the town gate Boaz meets with the other family redeemer and 10 town leaders.
 - 1. *The rights of the family redeemer* (4:1–5): Boaz reminds the other family redeemer that he has first chance to buy Elimelech’s land. The man is interested, but then Boaz adds that the buyer must also marry Ruth.
 - 2. *The refusal by the family redeemer* (4:6) : The other family redeemer declines to buy the land since it would endanger his own estate.
- B. **The symbol** (4:7–12): The family redeemer offers Boaz the estate and validates the transaction by giving him his sandal.
- C. **The son** (4:13–17)
 - 1. *The fruitfulness of Ruth* (4:13) : Ruth becomes Boaz’s wife, and she gives birth to a son.
 - 2. *The faithfulness of God* (4:14–17): The women in Bethlehem remind Naomi of the Lord’s goodness to her!
- D. **The summary** (4:18–22): In God’s marvelous plan Boaz and Ruth become great-grandparents of King David!

Memory verse: 8 - *Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” So he took off his sandal.*

Ruth 4

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, “Come aside, friend, sit down here.” So he came aside and sat down. ² And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down. ³ Then he said to the close relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. ⁴ And I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you will not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you.’ ”

And he said, “I will redeem *it*.”

⁵ Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”

⁶ And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*.”

⁷ Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel.

⁸ Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy *it* for yourself.” So he took off his sandal.
⁹ And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi. ¹⁰ Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day.”

¹¹ And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, “*We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman.”

Descendants of Boaz and Ruth

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! ¹⁵ And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.”
¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. ¹⁷ Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “There is a son born to Naomi.” And they called his name Obed. He *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; ¹⁹ Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; ²⁰ Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; ²¹ Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; ²² Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

Confession: I rest in my Redeemer’s love, knowing that He is transacting business on my behalf. I look forward to the day when He will return with the proof of His claim in His nail-pierced hand. Until that day I have the earnest of my inheritance!

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

☐ Sunday ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday

MARCH 17-23 – ASSURANCES FROM CORINTH

“We read some things in the Bible 365 times and they mean nothing to us, then suddenly we see what God means, because in some particular we have obeyed Him, and instantly His nature is opened up”. – Oswald Chambers

Overview: Although we live in the midst of a perverse and wicked generation, God has called us out of the darkness in order to shine the light of His glorious gospel upon those who would believe. God has called us to holy service, and He is able to give us victory over every foe.

Focus verses: 9,10 - *Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”*

Acts 18

After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. ³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. ⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. ⁶ But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” ⁷ And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” ¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¹² When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

¹⁴ And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. ¹⁵ But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*.” ¹⁶ And he drove them from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

¹⁸ So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. ¹⁹ And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the

synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, ²¹ but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

²² And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. ²³ After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Ministry of Apollos

²⁴ Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; ²⁸ for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Confession: *Lord, you know that I desire to fulfill your request to make disciples of all nations, and You have empowered us that we might work together to finish the task. When I am opposed by those who resist the truth, I will fervently pray that the Holy Ghost would open their eyes to the truth. I declare that no weapon formed against me shall prosper!*

THOUGHTS... INSIGHT... What is the Lord saying to me?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

☐ Sunday ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday

MARCH 24-30 – FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

“The Book of Esther never mentions God by name, there is never the word “prayer” uttered, and the only spiritual discipline that is mentioned is fasting but that never says anything about prayer and fasting. It doesn’t appear that Esther actually wrote this book because if she did, she wouldn’t have likely named it after herself. Many Bible scholars believe it was written by Mordecai although the book never says who the author actually was. Ultimately, we know that God is the real Author anyway, as with all Scripture. The lesson here is that even though there is no mention of God or of prayer, we know that God’s hand was on Esther and on Mordecai and that His divine timing is always the best, even if we don’t see it at the time. The silence of certain things in the Book of Esther doesn’t mean that there wasn’t prayer or that God was at work in this book.” - Jack Wellman

Overview: In this chapter Mordecai learns that Haman has issued a royal decree in the king’s name, stating that on a certain day the Jews are to be destroyed. So Mordecai asks Queen Esther to plead for the Jews before the king. The drama of the story is heightened in this episode by the nature of the laws of the Persian court. To go before the king without being called is to risk one’s life.

Focus verse: *14 – For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*

Esther 4

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. ² He went as far as the front of the king’s gate, for no one *might* enter the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth. ³ And in every province where the king’s command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ So Esther’s maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept *them*. ⁵ Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king’s eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was*. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king’s gate. ⁷ And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries to destroy the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. ⁹ So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: ¹¹ “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet

I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.” ¹² So they told Mordecai Esther’s words.

¹³ And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?”

¹⁵ Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”

¹⁷ So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

Confession: *There are times that I am reluctant to step out and do the right thing when I consider the personal cost. Lord, I ask at those times that you would help me to recognize that You have ordered my steps, and that I have come to the Kingdom for this time!*

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

()Sunday ()Monday ()Tuesday ()Wednesday ()Thursday ()Friday ()Saturday

MARCH 31 – APRIL 6 – THE LAST MILE OF THE WAY

“Solomon’s incredible gifting and downfall are summarized in the 10 verses of 1 Kings 10:24 to 1 Kings 11:4. In those ten verses, he specifically broke each of the restrictions that the scripture placed on the behavior of a king.”

Overview: This chapter begins with as melancholy a “but” as almost any we find in all the Bible. Everything we have read about Solomon up to this point was great and good; but the lustre both of his goodness and of his greatness is here sullied and eclipsed, and his sun sets under a cloud.

I. The glory of his piety is stained by his departure from God and his duty, in his latter days, marrying strange wives and worshipping strange gods (v. 4–8).

II. The glory of his prosperity is stained by God’s displeasure against him and the fruits of that displeasure. 1. He sent him an angry message (v. 9–13). 2. He stirred up enemies, who gave him disturbance, Hadad (v. 14–22), Rezon (v. 23–25). 3. He gave away ten tribes of his twelve, from his posterity after him, to Jeroboam, whom therefore he sought in vain to slay (v. 26–40), and this is all that remains here to be told concerning Solomon, except his death and burial (v. 41–43), for there is nothing perfect under the sun, but all is so above the sun.

Focus verse:

4- For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.

1 Kings 11

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites—²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

⁹So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, ¹⁰and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. ¹¹Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. ¹²Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³However I

will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

Adversaries of Solomon

¹⁴ Now the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was a descendant of the king in Edom. ¹⁵ For it happened, when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army had gone up to bury the slain, after he had killed every male in Edom ¹⁶ (because for six months Joab remained there with all Israel, until he had cut down every male in Edom), ¹⁷ that Hadad fled to go to Egypt, he and certain Edomites of his father’s servants with him. Hadad was still a little child. ¹⁸ Then they arose from Midian and came to Paran; and they took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, apportioned food for him, and gave him land. ¹⁹ And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, that is, the sister of Queen Tahpenes. ²⁰ Then the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh’s house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh’s household among the sons of Pharaoh.

²¹ So when Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me depart, that I may go to my own country.”

²² Then Pharaoh said to him, “But what have you lacked with me, that suddenly you seek to go to your own country?”

So he answered, “Nothing, but do let me go anyway.”

²³ And God raised up *another* adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his lord, Hadadezer king of Zobah. ²⁴ So he gathered men to him and became captain over a band of *raiders*, when David killed those of *Zobah*. And they went to Damascus and dwelt there, and reigned in Damascus. ²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that Hadad *caused*); and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

Jeroboam’s Rebellion

²⁶ Then Solomon’s servant, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother’s name was Zeruah, a widow, also rebelled against the king.

²⁷ And this *is* what caused him to rebel against the king: Solomon had built the Millo *and* repaired the damages to the City of David his father. ²⁸ The man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph.

²⁹ Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two *were* alone in the field. ³⁰ Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that *was* on him, and tore it *into* twelve pieces. ³¹ And he said to Jeroboam, “Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you ³² (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), ³³ because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do *what is* right in My eyes and *keep* My statutes

and My judgments, as *did* his father David. ³⁴ However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. ³⁵ But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes. ³⁶ And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. ³⁷ So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. ³⁸ Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do *what is* right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. ³⁹ And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.' ”

⁴⁰ Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

Death of Solomon

⁴¹ Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? ⁴² And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. ⁴³ Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

Confession: *May I always know that seeing Jesus face-to-face will be worth more than anything this world has to offer.*

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

()Sunday ()Monday ()Tuesday ()Wednesday ()Thursday ()Friday ()Saturday

April 7-13 – HE IS THE WAY!

**“Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself,
but because it contradicts them.” *Unknown***

Overview: The entire chapter of John 14 is comprised of the words of Jesus and what powerful words they are! Not only is He authoritative in His speech, but He is comforting, gentle, persuasive, reassuring, and commanding all at the same time. Every believer should read this passage over and over again because its content brings such peace! Not only does He speak of His preparation and provision for us, but He also gives us the Promise of the Holy Spirit. This chapter assures us that Jesus has made every provision necessary for the believer to live a life constantly accompanied by the Holy Spirit of God.

Memory verse: 26 – *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

John 14

¹ “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸ You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

²⁹ “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

Confession: *I am grateful for the gift of the Holy Ghost in my life. I do not have to live my life alone because I have the Holy Spirit residing on the inside of my heart. I will do greater works because I walk in the power and under the leadership of the Spirit of God. I will be taught by and accompanied by the Holy Spirit every day.*

THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?

()Sunday ()Monday ()Tuesday ()Wednesday ()Thursday ()Friday ()Saturday

EXAMPLE CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

CHAPTER

Luke 15

Read 5 times ☐ (check when done)

1. CAPTION (TITLE)

Lost and Found

2. CONTENTS

This chapter contains three parables.

1. Verses 3 – 7: The lost sheep
2. Verses 8 – 10: The lost coin
3. Verses 11 – 32: The lost son

3. CHIEF PEOPLE

The shepherd with the lost sheep
The woman with the lost coin
The father with the lost son

4. CHOICE VERSE

Luke 15:7 — “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

5. CRUCIAL WORD(S)

Lost (vv. 4, 8 – 9, 24, 32)
Found (5 – 6, 9, 24, 32)

6. CHALLENGES (Difficulties I need to study)

What does verse 7 mean — “ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent”?

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

7. CROSS-REFERENCES Luke 15:4 –

Matthew 18:11 – 14

Isaiah 53:6

John 10:10 – 14

Psalm 119:176

1 Peter 2:25

8. CHRIST SEEN

1st parable — Jesus the Good Shepherd searching for lost sheep.

2nd parable — the Holy Spirit our rightful Owner finding and restoring.

3rd parable — God the Father waiting to welcome us home.

9. CENTRAL LESSON(S)

Insights

The son went away saying, “Give me” (v. 12). He returned saying, “Make me”
God cares for sinners and eagerly waits for them to return home.

Characteristics of the immature brother

Anger — v. 28

Childishness — v. 28

Jealousy — vv. 29 – 30

Wrong perspective — vv. 29 – 30

Grumbling — vv. 29 – 30

10. CONCLUSION (Personal application)

In each of the three parables a concrete effort was made to recover what was lost. Many of my friends are lost without Christ. I need to develop specific witnessing plans for sharing the Gospel. I will start by sharing my faith with _____ this weekend.

I need to express more joy when I hear of people who have begun moving closer to God.

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

Read 5 times ☐ (check when done)

CHAPTER

1. CAPTION (TITLE)

2. CONTENTS

3. CHIEF PEOPLE

4. CHOICE VERSE

5. CRUCIAL WORD(S)

6. CHALLENGES (Difficulties I need to study)

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

7. CROSS-REFERENCES

8. CHRIST SEEN

9. CENTRAL LESSON(S)

10. CONCLUSION (Personal application)

PRAYER STARTER

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed" (Mark 1:35)

Begin with Praise: *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." (Psalm 100:4)*

"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel (your people)" (Psalm 22:3)

Pray for yourself: Ask God to give you faith, patience, forgiveness, good health, His providence and guidance, daily strength, spiritual blessing and encouragement, renewing of a right spirit, and a refilling of the Holy Ghost.

Pray for your family: Ask Him for the same thing to be done in their lives that you asked for yourself.

Pray for our church: Again, ask Him for the same things to be done in the lives of your brothers and sisters that you asked for yourself and family. Pray for your pastor, the leadership team, the faithfulness of our people, for revival and a vast harvest of souls starting with the guests that God is sending to our church.

Pray for the unsaved: Starting with your own family, co-workers, friends, schoolmates, neighbors, city, state, nation, and world – pray for people's hearts to be softened and their minds to be open to God's will for their lives.

Pray for the corporate church: Petition heaven for God's blessing on His church, its leaders and its work in the world, including the United Pentecostal Church.

Pray for world revival: Pray for miraculous revival in every land, including this land and every foreign land. Ask for God's help with our Global and North American Missionaries. Pray for the churches under their care. Ask the Lord for the same blessing on His churches around the world that we want in our church.

Pray for the miraculous to happen in our services: Ask God to grant repentance to sinners, backsliders, and the lukewarm. Ask for many baptisms in Jesus name and for

many infillings of the Holy Ghost. Ask for powerful church services, inspirational worship services, and life changing preaching. Ask Him to set this church apart from every non-Apostolic church with His favor and miraculous touch. Ask Him for the fulfillment of Isaiah 60 - where multitudes of people: religious and otherwise, flow into the light of His truth.

Pray for our church ministries: Ladies Ministry, Men's Ministry, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry, Nursery, Youth, Promotions, Ushers and Greeters. Pray for the family relationships in the church - husbands and wives, parents and children. Pray for all the relationships in the church – that His anointing would flow through the unity of His people.

Pray for our nation: Pray for our President and his family. Ask the Lord to give him godly wisdom and direction. Pray for his advisors, cabinet, and others who influence his daily decisions - for godly wisdom and right thinking. Pray for other government leaders - Congress, the Supreme Court, our state and local leaders - again for godly wisdom and right thinking. Ask God to turn our nation back towards righteousness!

"My deepest desire, Lord, is that I might know you in the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of your suffering, being made conformable unto your death." Philippians 3: 10

*"Lord, I make myself available to you. I present my body as a living sacrifice to you."
Romans 12:1*

*"This is the day that the Lord has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24*