

**The Weekly Word**  
August 7-13, 2017

Many take their vacations in August. If that is you, enjoy and keep your nose in God's book as you enjoy some RnR. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

**Monday, August 7: 2Kings 24- A warning to everyone...**

Sad times. Sad words... *It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence* (20).

When I was a child there was a TV show called 'Lost in Space.' The young boy of the family had a robot who used a phrase whenever he knew the son to be in trouble. The robot's phrase was something like this, "Warning, Will Robinson. Warning..."

This chapter and particularly verse 20 cries, "Warning, *fill in your name*. Warning." God's anger had grown and grown. For decades, even centuries Judah continued to turn her back on the Lord. He called and called to them through the prophets but they refused to answer. Finally the Lord said "Enough. My judgment will come."

Few words are more frightening than the last ones of that verse, *he thrust them from his presence*. It was the presence of God that protected them and defined them. Years ago Moses refused to go into the Promised Land if God withheld His presence (check out Exodus 33:12-15). Such was the power and importance of God's presence. And now that presence was gone!

This stands as a warning to us all. There comes a day, we know not when, when God will say, 'enough' and judge each of us. On that day we will either be His or He will stop calling and thrust us from His presence... forever.

God is impressing upon me the importance of following Him, of remaining faithful to Him. I want to follow the Lord out of love and devotion... but a little fear—fear of being thrust from His presence—is some additional motivation to stay true to the Lord.

What do you think?

*Oh, God, I would not want to live one day without Your presence. I don't know what is around the future bends in the road of life. But I know that I can and will face anything that comes if You are by my side. I need You, Lord, and I love you, Lord. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Tuesday, August 8: 2Kings 25- Disobedience reaps its unfortunate reward....**

The end comes. I really don't know what to think or write. The destruction of the Temple, deportation of the people and the fall of Judah is a sad day in the story of God's people. Disobedience reaps its unfortunate reward.

I don't have any deep inspiration... sad days are sad days. Disobedience gets tiring to process. God's judgment is a real deal and it will not be 'fun' when the Lord unleashes His judgment on those who have rejected Him.

Sadness wells over me as I think about the many people who have not put their trust in Jesus. Their judgment will be even worse than what Israel faced when God sent them to Babylon.

*Oh, God, I offer myself to You to be used to help people come to know You. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, August 9: Ephesians 1- Overwhelmed by God's blessings...**

Reading in the New Testament provides a breath of fresh air for me. The story of the kings was growing tedious with the judgments and problems coming on Judah toward the end.

Ephesians opens with outstanding truths...

Some of my friends complain that my sentences are often run-on sentences. That may be fair and true but Paul was a master of the complex sentence. The NIV and other translations make him more easily readable.

Did you know that verses 3 to 14 is one sentence. I have placed the NIV translation below. I didn't change the NIV's punctuation. Be that as it may, I invite you to read this incredible statement of Paul, understanding it as one continuous sentence...

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory (3-14).*

I am breathless reading this... we were chosen before creation to be adopted as sons, heirs of the promise, to receive every spiritual blessing. Oh ,my, and this is just the start of Paul's amazing word.

I went back and read it again...I cannot possibly absorb all of what he and the Lord are saying in these words. We are marked and sealed by God the Spirit. Our redemption is guaranteed by the Spirit. I soak some more, overwhelmed by God's blessings.

*Lord, Your Word blesses me. I feel so honored and loved. I am amazed by Your grace and love. I bless You and pray to You in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Thursday, August 10: Ephesians 2- Jesus Christ is the answer...**

*His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit (15-18).*

The new people of God... In Jesus Christ God reconciled people who were at enmity with God and brought peace into the previously fractured relationship. Jesus accomplished this through the cross. The cross settled the score. It paid the price. It ransomed our pardon. It brings any person –Jew or Gentile –into to right relationship with God.

All who are in Christ are new creations, the old is gone and the new has come. In Christ we are God's family and we can call God our Father, Abba.

Faith in Jesus is the difference and the answer to our broken relationship with God. The result of faith in Jesus is that we now have peace with God... Alleluia.

*Jesus, thank You for bridging the gap and providing the way back into relationship with the God. Praise be to You, Lord and Savior Jesus. Praise be to the Father and the Spirit as well. Amen and amen.*

### **Friday, August 11: Ephesians 3- Confidence through Jesus Christ the Lord...**

The wonder, power and amazing gift of Jesus Christ burrowed into my soul as I read and then contemplated verse 12. *In him [Christ Jesus our Lord] and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

Through faith in Jesus I can approach God who is sovereign over all things freely and with confidence... confidence that God will receive me.

Confidence that God looks forward to my entering His presence...

Confidence that God will listen to my pleas, cries, conversation, joys...

Confidence that God will always have time for me...

Confidence that God will receive me as He receives Jesus His son...

Confidence that God will forgive any of my sins...

My confidence is not in myself, rather it is in Jesus, my Savior and Lord.

This statement by Paul reminds me of what the writer to the Hebrews writes in verse 4:16: *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

We have confidence that we will receive mercy and grace when we enter God's presence.

What a gift this is... access to God and confidence that when we enter His presence we will receive mercy and grace... Wow, what a gift and it all comes by faith in Jesus.

Today I marvel at God's goodness found in Jesus, my Savior! What a great morning with the Lord!!!

*Oh, God, thank you for the blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord... You are so good, Lord, so good!! I bless You and thank You. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Saturday, August 12: Ephesians 4- Living a life worthy of your calling...**

This chapter begins Paul's 'so what.' What affect should the Christian faith have on a person's life? The Christian faith should affect the entirety of one's life; how we speak to others, how we treat others, what we believe and how we treat people inside and outside the faith.

No part of a person's life is unaffected by faith in Jesus... or at least that is the way it is supposed to be. I love the instructions regarding stealing. *Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need* (28). Not only are they supposed to STOP stealing, but they are to find work, not simply to support themselves and their family, but so that they can help people in need.

WOW... the Christian faith pushes a person far beyond being good and doing the right thing. Faith in Jesus gives us new eyes to see life differently and a new heart that longs to make the world a better place.

As I typed that last line, it was as if God began asking me, "How are you doing, Bill, with making your world a better place? Are you taking care of those in need? Are you being kind to others?" The questions kept coming. God is asking me how faith in Jesus is changing my life.

How is faith in Jesus changing your life?

Think about it... there is plenty of fodder in this chapter to use as a plumb line for your life.

*God, thank You... thank You that faith is practical. Problem is God, I still need so much help living into the depth and reality of faith in Jesus. Help me please, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Sunday, August 13, 2017, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.