

The Weekly Word
October 16-22, 2017

After a busy weekend it is wonderful to be refreshed by God's Word. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, October 16: John 10- Do you believe?...

The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

"We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God" (24-33).

One of the important features of John's gospel is its declarations of Jesus as God. Throughout this gospel the divinity of Jesus is declared from the very first verses, and John mixes into the narrative confirming words and accounts of Jesus' divinity.

Today we have another declaration. This one by Jesus Himself to the Jews and religious leaders. The Jews understand Him clearly and seek to stone him as a result. Notice their reason, *We are...stoning you... for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.*" (33).

It seems to me that it is reasonable and fair to not believe the Bible, to think the Bible is a human book filled with created and made up stories that are not historically accurate. If you believe that then you can write off any truth contained in it that you want. However, if you believe the Bible to be historically accurate then one must accept, at face value, that Jesus believes Himself to be God and that He clearly spoke that to people of His day. To say Jesus' divinity was a concoction of the early church is to believe the Bible is filled with concocted stories.

Taking the Bible at face value, it teaches that

- Jesus is God in human flesh
- He was born through Mary who became 'with child' by God not through human sexual relations
- Jesus voluntarily gave up His life for our sins
- Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

And so much more.

This morning my reading confronts me with a three word sentence. Do you believe???

I do believe the Bible. I do believe in Jesus as God who gave His life for me and my sins (and the sins of the world).

I do believe, do you?

Lord, I believe. Send the Holy Spirit to give me strength to believe and act in accordance with my belief. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, October 17: John 11- O what a savior...

Even after all these years of reading the Bible, I am still amazed how the simplest word in the text can draw me into my daily meditation. This morning, despite all the tremendous teaching packed into this chapter, it was a word from Thomas that launched my meditation.

Verse 16 reads, *Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."* As dull and clueless the disciples seem at times, they could feel the pressure mounting around Jesus. The Jewish leaders were growing more and more impatient with Jesus. And if the disciples knew it, then Jesus certainly knew it. Jesus' death in Jerusalem was looming for all of them.

I wondered particularly about Jesus. What was it like to live with this impending doom over your life constantly? And yet here he was giving and loving and teaching and demonstrating God's love and kingdom despite what he knew –and the disciples knew –was coming.

As I sat this morning I marveled at Jesus... fully human. What were His deepest thoughts like? And how did he face any fears head on without letting on?

Jesus truly was human. The depth of His humanness pours out as He stands outside Lazarus' tomb. *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Jesus wept. ... Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb.* (33-38a).

Deeply moved, weeping, deeply moved again... Jesus' emotions rise to the surface. Who of us hasn't stood at a graveside of a loved one and not been moved? Jesus is just like one of us... He was human.

As I grasped and wrestled with Jesus' humanness it hit me... He understands! Jesus understands us because Jesus is one of us. What an amazing picture of God in human flesh (John 1:14).

For the umpteenth time in my life I sit realizing how much God loves me (us) that Jesus became human to lead us back to the Father.

O what a Savior. O what a God. Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You did, felt, and endured to communicate the Father's love to all humankind. I bless You and I thank You and I pray in Your name. Amen.

Wednesday, October 18: John 12- A gift of pure love...

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume [worth more than a year's wages]; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (3).

Extravagant love... Mary took what may have been her dowry money and anointed Jesus with the whole of it. Where a few dabs would have adequately anointed Him, she poured out the whole lot. Certainly she was grateful, Jesus had just raised her brother from the dead. But Jesus understands in her gift something even deeper, anointing for His burial. Others may feel His death is coming (remember Thomas in an earlier chapter?), but Jesus knows it is coming.

Back to Mary's gift... so extravagant, so filled with love.

I have never even come close to giving my Lord that valuable a gift. I sit here this morning humbled by Mary's sacrifice of love.

I love You, Lord. I am humbled by Mary's generosity and demonstration of her love. Honestly, I have no more words to say... Amen.

Thursday, October 19: John 13- Washing feet...

Washing feet...it is not difficult to understand that the slave who washed feet was generally the lowest slave in the household pecking order. Imagine being the one who stooped down every time a person and guest entered the house, your job to handle the bare or sandaled feet and wash them.

Jesus, Rabbi, and the one and only Son of God, stooped down and washed the feet of all His disciples –even Judas’ –because not one of the disciples were willing to do so. Rising up after the job was done Jesus said, *You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (13-17).*

What are we, His followers, to make of this?

Our posture is not to lord it over others, but to be willing to stoop and wash feet. Serving someone even in a most humbling way is humbling. Yes, but it is also honoring, loving and caring. Jesus modeled that. This is His way of life and as disciples we are to walk His way.

By humbling Himself, Jesus didn’t give up his rabbi, teacher, Lord position. He gave it dimension... He infused it with love. And that is how we are to live.

For us it could mean literally washing someone’s feet, but more than likely, it will be some other form of humble service.

Jesus looks my way and asks, “Am I willing to stoop, to dip my hands in the filth of the world and serve others, not because they are good, but because they are human?”

I am reminded that Judas’ two feet were washed along with all the others.

Am I willing to stoop, to dip my hands in the filth of the world and serve others, not because they are good, but because they are human? Are you?...

Think about it...

Words fail as my heart warms. I am Yours... direct me to whomever You need me to serve in Your name. Amen.

Friday, October 20: John 14- You who are the way...

There it was in the text of the day, John 14:6: *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* An amazing statement about who Jesus is and what Jesus provides for people who follow and believe in Him.

Jesus is the way... He leads us home to the Father God.

Jesus is the truth... in a world that seems to be losing the idea of truth and of right and wrong Jesus is the truth. His words ground us and stabilize us in a shifting world.

Jesus is the life... He gives us what we seek most in life... not simply living, but life and elsewhere we are told He gives us life abundantly!

I was in worship yesterday and we sang a song, which so wonderfully captures the essence of this verse. It is *You who are the way* by Angelo Natalie (ccli 5512911). The chorus goes like this:

You who are the Way we follow You

You who are the Truth we believe in You

You who are the Life we draw our breath from You
You who are the Way we walk with You
You who are the Truth we will sing of You
You who are the Life we'll rise again in You

Yes... this is Jesus. He is *the way and the truth and the life*. And it was such a powerful way to sing the truth of Jesus in worship and to bring the truth of Jesus into my life!

Thank You, Jesus, for coming and leading us home to the loving arms of the Father. Thank You, Jesus, for being truth, for showing us right and wrong and being an anchor of truth in the shifting sands of a relative world. Thank You, Jesus, for being life, for giving life and giving it abundantly. Thank You and praise You, Jesus, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Saturday, October 21: John 15- ...

The vine and the branches is one of the more recognizable chapters in the gospels. As we have found with John's gospel, he packs a great deal of teaching into each chapter.

An intriguing insight struck me as I was reading verses 5-8: *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.***

As I came to the words I bolded, I had the usual thought, "Wow, ask whatever you wish and it will be done" What a promise. However, is it really true. Countless believers ask for the healing of a loved one that doesn't happen. And how many other prayers could be added to the list of unanswered prayers?

As I pondered this I realized that "remaining in Jesus" is a prerequisite. But I am wondering about Christians who do not have their wishes granted. And it seems that Christians are the ones remaining in the vine, so why are the wishes not granted?

As I pondered this verse 8 came into view, *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples*. Could it be that this is not some carte blanche promise that anything we wish for will come true, but that it must be heard in the context of bearing fruit for the kingdom... fruit that shows we are disciples of Jesus?

This thought doesn't eliminate all my questions regarding the 'ask for anything you wish' promise but it does push me in directions I haven't pondered deeply.

As I consider this one thing I am realizing that doing things that give glory to the Father has to rise higher on my life-goal list. Life isn't about seeking me and mine... my pleasure, my desire, my wishes. It is about living a manner of life that gives glory to God. On this score I have a great deal still to learn.

Lord, I offer You today. Point out to me things I should, could, do that bring You glory that I ordinarily may miss or skip over. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, October 22, 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.

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