

The Weekly Word
November 20-26, 2017

Wow, it is Thanksgiving week... I can't believe another year has flown by. In your Thanksgiving be sure to thank God for His precious Word. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, November 20: Revelation 19- Worship is central to our relationship with the Lord...

With the great prostitute defeated, the beast's power is gone and the Lord wins the decisive battle with ease. Halleluiah! Cut off the head and the snake dies! Halleluiah.

From the victory my thoughts traveled to worship. How often heaven erupts in praise to the Lord. Halleluiahs ring out over and over again to the Lord throughout this book.

A friend has said that worship here on earth is rehearsal for worship in heaven. Seeing all the time worship breaks out in the book of Revelation makes me think we need more practice!

Worship is central to our relationship with the Lord. God is worthy... oh, so worthy. God is worthy now and He is worthy forever. So we should be lauding and praising and worshipping and singing to the Lord regularly.

Jesus Christ has conquered the grave and defeated the powers and principalities. Jesus has redeemed us and brought us into His kingdom... each of these and so much more God has already done for us. Yes, God is worthy of praise, indeed...

And our worship and praise is always GOD focused and GOD centered. We worship God because of who He is and what the Lord has done...

Halleluiah.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty the King of creation. Oh, my soul praise Him for He is our help and salvation! All you who bear now to His temple drawer near....

Halleluiah. Halleluiah. Amen.

Tuesday, November 21: Revelation 20- The only escape is faith in God -Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit ...

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ... The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire (10, 13-15).

Finally judgment has come. God's verdict is issued and the sentence is executed; God's enemies are thrown into the lake of fire where *[t]hey will be tormented day and night forever and ever*. The imagery is horrible. It is difficult for me to imagine eternal torment. I honestly don't want to imagine it. It is frightening,

And yet, this destiny is established and set for anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life. The only escape is faith in God -Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit.

I am humbled. I am grateful. I have few words...

Thank You, Oh, God. But for Your grace there go I... Amen.

Wednesday, November 22: Revelation 21- The glorious reward...

Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children (7). Finally, John paints pictures of the glorious reward for all the saints. God gives us a glimpse of eternity for those who love Jesus and live honoring the Lord.

My heart sighs in relief... everything in the book and in life led to this... the wonder, the beauty, the serenity, the perfect of life eternal. I re-read the chapter just to lap up the imagery. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (3-4).

Joy fills my heart... stay faithful. Stay true to the Lord and this is God's reward.

Day by day, Lord, I pray for strength to live for You, to honor You, to serve You and to be a tool in Your hands. Amen and amen.

Thursday, November 23: Revelation 22- Worship God alone!...

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!" (8-9).

John's reaction of falling before the angel in worship seems like such a natural reaction. This angel of God gives you a tour of heaven and what is to come... speaking for God, showing what God will do and leading you to the wonder of God. Worship and praise seems like an innocent reaction, but John is met with an instant and stinging rebuke.

"Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!"

It hit me, how easily and innocently we can make the same mistake, worshipping –and if that word seems too strong, adoring –the messenger rather than God who sent him.

As I consider this scenario, I see dangers on both sides of the action.

For the 'adorer' we set our eyes on the wrong target. God himself fades into the background as the messenger takes center stage. This is idolatry no matter how 'innocent' it might be. When anyone or anything displaces God from the center, sin has crept in and taken hold!

For the messenger to receive the adoration of another that is rightly due only to for the Lord is blasphemy... taking the place of God when you are not God. The angel in the book of Revelation understood that and immediately rebuked the wrong and spoke truth. How often, sadly do preachers and teachers and leaders in similar situations revel in the praise rather than giving due honor to the Lord. Many a pastor has fallen into this sin, I fear. Herod, in Acts 12:23 was struck down by God because he accepted praise reserved only for God.

I need to examine my heart...

- Have I misplaced my praise in any area no matter how seemingly small, placing it on men rather than God?
- Have I accepted inappropriate praise or adoration from someone instead of deflecting it to the rightful one, the Lord God almighty?

Oh, God, penetrate my heart, show me if I have sinned or am sinning in either of these ways. Show me, Lord, that I might repent before You, my Savior and my God. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Friday, November 24: Ecclesiastes 1- What is the meaning of life?...

Ecclesiastes is quite a switch from Revelation!

What is the meaning of life? The writer is wondering; most of us wonder about this from time to time. What is the meaning of life?

Is it to grab as many new and fresh experiences that one can? Is it a quest for knowledge or sensual pleasure?

So much of life is a never-ending circle of this, that or another thing. The writer puts it far more eloquently: *Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again (4-7).*

Where do I find meaning?

Where do you find meaning? This will be the great question of this book. Ask it! Wonder, think, question, probe your heart and your mind. What makes you tick. What keeps you going? What fills your life and empowers you to live?

Lord, I have found my answer in You... Amen.

Saturday, November 25: Ecclesiastes 2- What am I chasing?...

To be so wealthy and important that whatever you want to do you can do is a life beyond me. I cannot fathom living like that. Yet, that was the life of the writer of Ecclesiastes. In his exploration of meaning he tried pouring himself into everything he could think of ... great building, great fun, deep thinking. Nothing satisfied the deep itch within.

We haven't changed much as humans in the millenniums since his writing. What do people continue to pour their lives into... building personal 'empires', having all the fun they can imagine, thinking and study. Oh, maybe people cannot do it to the degree the writer did, but it is focus rather than amplitude that matters to life. Whether our 'empire' is a simple house and a comfortable life or the empire of a one-percent-er it doesn't really matter because the focus for both is me, myself and I.

The writer is wise enough to pause and ponder meaning. He discovers, *A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? (24-25).*

Though his quest isn't over, he is beginning to see the light. Without God in our lives and providing focus for our lives we accumulate things, material goods, wisdom or experiences only to hand what we have accumulated off to someone else when we die. And they may or may not treasure what we give them; they certainly didn't earn what we give them. This all seems quite meaningless. We strive only to leave all our accumulated striving to another. Meanwhile we miss out on finding deep satisfaction in life.

The deep satisfaction, according to the writer comes from God, *for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?*

Now is the time for me to pause... to ponder what am I about in life? What is my focus? What drives me forward? Is God my drive? For only then will it satisfy?

More to ponder and consider...

Lord, on this eve of worship, may I probe my life to make sure You are central to what I do but, even more importantly, who I am. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, November 26, 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.