

## The Weekly Word

Aug 17-23, 2015

Another blessed week in God's Word. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

### **Monday, August 17: 2Thessalonians 2- Stand firm, tough days are ahead...**

Troubled by false reports, the Thessalonians are upset. Paul sets them straight, explaining that tough days are ahead, days when God's enemy will rule here on earth. The enemy will seek to dupe people into following him through signs and wonders. He will work to get all religions to recognize that he is supreme.

I can only image that will be one interesting time. It sounds like it might be a time of surface unity as people fall in step with the deceiver who 'wows' them with miracles and talk. With mass media today it is easy to gain a world-hearing.

To the nervous church in Thessalonica Paul says. *So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter* (15).

Paul's word to them works well as a word to me (to us). Stand firm and hold fast to God's teachings, for us today, God's teachings are the words of Scripture.

My safety from false religious thoughts and ideas, from imposters, from all manner of misguided 'truth proclaimers' is a solid personal footing in God's Word. The better I know what God has actually said, the stronger I will be in Christ as false ideas spread.

Signs and wonders coveted by so many in the Christian faith can be counterfeited. (This is a lesson seen way back in Moses day when Pharaoh's magicians could perform some of Moses' signs from God.) What offers me (and you) lasting security is God's Word. God's Word will stand the test of time and is the firm faith foundation.

*Thank You, Lord God, for Your Word. It is one thing to have it in my possession (i.e. own a bible). It is another to take God's Word into my life through reading, study, meditation and prayer. Lord, I dedicate myself to do just that... read, study, meditate on and pray Your Word. Thanks and bless You, Lord, for giving us Your forever true Word. Amen.*

### **Tuesday, August 18: 2Thessalonians 3- It is good to work...**

Paul makes an interesting comment to Thessalonians who will not work. He writes, *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.* I suspect this is the origin of the phrase I heard growing up, 'Idle hands are the devil's workshop.'

Paul continues, *For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat"* (6-10).

I don't know what was going on in Thessalonica but apparently some were not working and were freeloading off the community, expecting that the communities 'love' would feed and care for them. I started thinking, "What crooked thinking would lead to this behavior? However, I quickly checked myself and started thinking what these words teach and say to me...

- To the best of my ability I should provide for myself and my family even as I serve the Lord.
- Don't be an undue burden to others whenever possible.
- Work was a pre-fall task of humanity; it continues to be a task today.
- When I have 'free' time, use it wisely, use it for the Lord; don't stir up trouble for others.

These are some of my thoughts as I start my day.

*Lord, as I set off for work today, I pray that the labor of my hands glorifies You and provides for my family. To Your name, may I be true. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, August 19: Psalm 54- God is with me...**

One of my life phrases is 'stuff happens.' People hurt us and even turn against us. We get sick or in an accident. Appliances break. Cars need to be repaired. We are misunderstood in a conversation. Things go wrong. We don't get the promotion or worse, we lose our jobs, etc. etc. etc. Stuff happens.

No matter what happens, God is with us. God is right there standing beside us. God is our ever-present help in times of trouble.

David is in one of those times when stuff is happening. What does he do? David turns to the Lord his God. David cries out to the Lord, *Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might. Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth (1-2).*

Those simple words, David's honest cry, speak volumes to me about God being with us all the time. And when we need God, He is only a cry away.

We sing a simple song in worship some Sundays titled, Whisper His name. It opens like this:

Whisper His name (Jesus)  
Whisper His name (Jesus)  
Whisper His name (Jesus)  
And He will answer you

Whisper His name  
Whisper His name  
Whisper His name  
And He will come to you

Call out His name (Jesus)  
Call out His name (Jesus)  
Call out His name (Jesus)  
And He will come to you

Shout out His name (Jesus)  
Shout out His name (Jesus)  
Shout out His name (Jesus)  
And He will run to you

Hearing the entire church echo back to the worship leader the name ‘Jesus’ is a powerful moment of worship for me. And the simple truth of this song echoes the truth of this Psalm... when we whisper, call or shout out to our God –Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit –He will answer, come or run to us as the situation warrants!

*Lord, God, I am so blessed to serve and be loved by such a caring, protecting, loving God. Thank You, Father! Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Holy Spirit, for always being there... in good times or bad, You are there with me. Praise be to You, Lord God! Alleluia. Amen.*

#### **Thursday, August 20: Psalm 55- Trust in the midst of betrayal...**

As I was reading and praying along with David this morning, I found myself thinking about all the times David was in trouble. So many of his Psalms express trouble and hardship caused by an enemy. My ‘go to’ image of David is that of a great king, living in a palace, enjoying kingly things. But much of his life was touched by trouble.

It is clear in verses 13-14 that his enemy today was a former companion, someone with whom he used to enjoy sweet fellowship. Oh, how the betrayal of a friend stings. *My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords* (20-21). How particularly hurtful it is when a trusted friend betrays us. David knew that sting and like always he turned to God in times of trouble.

And David lets his feeling rip as he prays. *Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead, for evil finds lodging among them* (15).

I step back from this prayer of David and ponder two thoughts that fly to me.

One, how honest David is with God about what he is feeling and experiencing. David bares his soul and this is something I can learn to do as well. I am often guarded in expressing myself with others and even the Lord. I can free myself from those shackles at least as it pertains to the Lord. I can, even should, be as totally honest as I can with Him when I pray. And my utter honesty with the Lord has to do with both what is going on in my life and what I hope God will do about it. The Lord is big enough to answer me appropriately.

Secondly, the utter faith of David to trust in the Lord... the entire Psalm but particularly the closing 2 verses remind me God is faithful. And I know God’s faithfulness in my life. The Lord has never let me down. He has always been there with me, no matter the storms or the pain.

*Thank You, Lord, God, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit. Thank you for being a refuge in storms and strength when I am weak. Praise to You, Lord, God. As for me, I trust in You. Amen.*

#### **Friday, August 21: Psalm 56- A man after God’s own heart...**

This Psalm was written before David became king of Israel. I realized this as I read the Psalm setting, which noted that David wrote this Psalm when the Philistines seized him in Gath. This small tidbit told me that David had a strong connection with the Lord long before he became a famous king. As a young man, David cultivated an understanding of God’s Word –this is an amazing thought and a connection with God through prayer and Psalm writing. In verses 10-11 he sings: *In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?*

To become ‘a man after God’s own heart,’ as David was described (Acts 13:22) requires a lifelong pursuit of God and deep down trust in God. David had both.

I was raised in the church and while in my late teens, I grabbed hold of faith in Jesus, personally, and I have been walking with the Lord ever since. I am no David but as I continue pursuing God, studying and building my life on God's Word, I, too, can have a relationship with God like David had.

The same is true for all of us, if we pursue God who loves us with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and truly trust God with our lives and our future.

This is what my spirit heard as I spent time in Psalm 56 today.

*Lord, God, I pray that my love and trust of You grows exponentially as the number of my days increases. Here is my life, take it and use it for Your glory and honor. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.*

### **Saturday, August 22: Psalm 57- Be exalted, O God...**

I am in a good place emotionally, spiritually, physically and relationally right now. Life is good and my heart really could not connect with the cries for mercy, vindication and salvation in the early part of the Psalm. But my heart did dance when it read the close of the Psalm.

*My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth (7-11).*

As I sit this morning, there is some intermittent rolling thunder and a steady downpour of rain outside. I imagine all of the plants dancing with joy; as this liquid gold falls from the sky and the gardens drinking in this nourishing meal. My heart felt that way as it soaked in David's praise of the God Who watches over him.

I have experienced the watchful eye of God, caring, vindicating, and loving me.

This morning my heart sings praise to the Lord alongside David and his words of praise.

*My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast in love for You; I will sing and praise You with my lips. My soul is awake, my heart delights in You!*

*As my day dawns, I praise you, Lord, Lord of heaven and earth, Lord over all the nations; I will shout Your name among the peoples of the earth. I will make Your greatness known. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. Alleluia. Amen.*

### **Sunday, August 23, 2015, 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.