

**The Weekly Word**  
March 26-April 1, 2012

I have been particularly blessed by this week's readings. I hope you are as well. Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

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

**Monday, March 26: John 20- Time to believe...**

John tells us directly why he wrote his Gospel. *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name* (20:31). From his opening words until now, John has been working to convince readers to put their faith in Jesus.

As we have traveled with Jesus via John's pen, we have watched and listened as Christ followers grew in their ability to believe. Belief may be an instant moment for some, but for many, belief takes time.

Even in today's chapter we see belief grow over time. Mary showed up at the tomb, distressed. Her vision of the angels and of Jesus, whom she didn't recognize, seemed to cause her more confusion. Yet by the time she made it to the disciples, she was convinced, "*I have seen the Lord!*" (18).

Thomas is another example. Though not present when Jesus first came to the disciples he refused to believe unless he personally saw and touched Jesus. He was not about to take the other disciples at their word, even though he basically lived with them for three years (!). NO, Thomas had to see for himself. Despite all their attempts to convince Thomas during the week, he couldn't cross the line of belief. But he did make sure he was with them when they gathered that next weekend. Only after Jesus showed himself to Thomas did he believe.

Thomas needed time and proof...

We all have our own recipe of time and proof necessary to believe. If you have not yet put your faith and belief in Jesus, what do you still need to cross the line of belief?

Will you, like Thomas, put yourself in a place where you will receive what you need to believe?

*These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

*O Lord, show me how to help people believe. Show me, Lord, how I can help people cross the line of belief so that they can have life, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Tuesday, March 27: John 21- In the midst of life...**

I found it intriguing that seven of the disciples were hanging out together and fishing. Whether they were friends, prior to their years with Jesus, we cannot determine since we don't even know who all seven were. But surely after three years, friendships grew.

What I also find interesting is that they are not in Jerusalem, but somewhere on the Sea of Galilee. Apparently after the resurrection they returned to the familiar territory of where they lived before Jesus entered their lives. Fishing was natural way for Simon and the sons of Zebedee to get food.

In the company of friends, doing what they normally do, Jesus shows up and redirects their lives.

Jesus entering normal life, redirecting, changing, calling... a thought worthy of meditation.

Long ago, as a grad student working on my thesis, Jesus knocked on my heart and placed within me the idea of seminary. My life trajectory changed.

Is some kind of radical life call the only way Jesus enters life and redirects, changes and calls? I think not.

What started with two women sitting next to each other in worship has blossomed into a mentoring relationship with the older wiser mom, helping the younger single mom deal with a special needs child. Hmmm... Jesus entering normal life, redirecting, changing, calling...

The other day a voice message beeped on my home phone when I walked in. A long tough day, I was tired and didn't really want to check the call. The voice leaving the message began with a bubbly, "I wanted to call and cheer you up and tell you Jesus loves you..." No request, no needs, simply an encouraging phone message from a special woman in my church who has this knack of calling people just to sprinkle joy and love. Well, her voicemail did just that. Through her voice, Jesus entered my life, encouraging me. I was blessed that in the midst of her day she had the nudge to call and leave that message, and that she did it.

My final thought on my meditative journey today is this, "Do I leave room in my life for Jesus to show up and redirect me? Do you?"

*Oh Lord, break into the routine of my life today... give me an assignment, a calling, to touch someone's life with Your love. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, March 28: Hebrews 1- Glory and majesty of the SON...**

Reading this magnificent description of the Son, Jesus, after having just read John's Gospel is a one-two punch of the majesty and glory of Jesus. This is the heart of our faith—the Christian Faith— that Jesus is God's One and Only son and God Himself.

The writer to the Hebrews makes it painstakingly clear that Jesus, the SON, is greater than any other. He is even greater than angels who are superhuman messengers from God endowed with strengths and abilities beyond anything known in our material world. And in addition to their powers, they live in the presence of Almighty God. Yet no angel can compare with the SON, Jesus. *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.*

I sat and pondered the SON... I thought about His earthy ministry and even more, I contemplated Jesus at the right hand of Majesty. I have few words... but many images and pictures and further wonderings about the One I worship and love... Jesus, my Lord and Savior and the Lord Almighty...

*Holy Spirit, fill my life today with the Majesty of Jesus. Allow me to see and hear things that will increase my devotion to and love for Jesus, the Father, and You. I pray this in the name of the Oone who sits at the right hand of Majesty, Jesus the One and Only Son. Amen.*

### **Thursday, March 29: Hebrews 2- One-liners of substance...**

Verse 1: *We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.*

Verse 8: ... *In putting everything under him [Jesus], God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.*

Verse 17: *For this reason he [Jesus] had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

Verse 18: *Because he [Jesus] himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Even with all the teaching about Jesus, I found my spirit drawn to verse 1 and the commendation to pay careful attention lest we drift away. One of the important themes of Hebrews is constantly calling believers to persevere, to pay attention to their faith, and the trajectory of their faith.

Am I growing closer to Jesus, the Father and the Spirit, or am I drifting away? This question leads to self-examination. I confess that I am a mixed bag, with some areas of growth and some of stagnation.

How about you? Are you sailing toward God or drifting away? This is serious business...

*Lord God, I pray with the Father in the Gospel. I believe, help my unbelief. Oh Lord, I seek to grow to be more like Jesus, to manifest the Fruit of the Spirit, to exude faith in Jesus. Help me in my areas of weakness and sloth. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Friday, March 30: Hebrews 3- Faithful...**

Verse 2 caught my eye. Here's how the writer opens today's chapter. *Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house (1-2).* '1' was the line I bolded that attracted my attention.

Jesus was faithful to the one who appointed Him...

I mulled over faithfulness... its hues, shades and applications in my life. I considered my relationship with the Lord, and particularly my faithfulness.

*Lord, are there any particular areas of my life that need work? Areas where I am less than faithful, even areas where I am fooling myself? Lord, speak to me, show me and help me grow stronger and more faithful in those areas.*

I scanned areas like...use of time, charity & giving, how I speak and treat others, willingness to do God's promptings, over and above my own desires...

Next I reviewed those relationships closest to me... with my spouse, children, parents, friends and coworkers.

*Lord, do I treat these important people in my life with the respect and honor that behooves a Christ Follower? Am I kind and loving, faithful to my word and words, gracious, patient, honest, truthful and full of goodness? Does my life encourage them to desire a deeper relationship with You or do they view me as a hypocrite?*

*Oh, Lord, help me be the kind of person others want to be around. A person who blesses lives like those who were around You found their lives blessed.*

Next I thought about my work and civic duties. I thought about things like work-ethic and effort. I considered my response to civic issues like paying taxes and giving back to my community...

*Lord, do I represent You well in my work and civic endeavors? Do I give of myself in these ways, adding to the common good through my efforts?*

*Lord Jesus, help me to be faithful to You in all spheres of my life. May my life make a difference in small and not so small ways, as Your will determines. May I, Jesus, be faithful to You in all areas of my life. In Your name, Jesus, I bring these requests to the Father through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

### **Saturday, March 31: Hebrews 4- ...**

I felt a little out of it as I was reading today, and I wondered if the Word could burrow into my exhausted body. The theme of rest was a read disconnect with me as I read today, probably because I was so exhausted. It never ceases to surprise me how much my personal attitude or situation impacts my time with the Lord.

Anyway, when I turned into verse 12, the text light up. *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

I pictured not a Roman sword but a surgeon's scalpel... with precise cuts, body layers are sliced apart. Surgery is performed to bring health back into a damaged, broken or diseased body. And that's what God's Word does to me and for me regularly.

When I exercise the discipline of reading and contemplating the Word, it works its way into my life, surgically healing and repairing my depraved human condition, cutting out sin. Actually God's Word generally confronts me of my sin and then I must rely on the Holy Spirit to help me gain victory over that sin. Victory comes with the cooperative effort of exercising my will and God's strength to do so in a godly manner.

And so my meditations went.

Before I closed in prayer, I looked back at verse 12-13 and noticed the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence. *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.* One final thought came to me. "No use pretending, Bill. Deal with your sins and issues. God knows what they are anyway. You are only fooling yourself when you pretend you don't have sins to contend with."

This thought brings me back to the gift of God's Word... which can penetrate and repair the sin-diseased areas of my life. Thanks be to God!

*Lord, thank You for Your Word, a gift. Yes, like surgery, sometimes my time in Your Word hurts... but it is a repairing, healing hurt. I didn't like the pain and recovery time I needed after my emergency appendectomy, but I am alive today because of it.*

*Lord, thank You that I am spiritually alive today because of the scalpel work of Your Word in my life. Thank You... Lord Jesus, Father and Spirit. Thank You. Amen.*

### **Sunday, April 1, 2012, 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.