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# DAILY *manna*

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GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

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*Daily devotions for reading through the Bible*

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

In 2012, we are covering the same ground – the New Testament – as 2011. In this quarter, we will be covering the Gospels of Luke and John. Revision is the key to being rooted in the truth. We grow by going deeper. The Bible tells us that our knowledge of Holy Scripture is built by “precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). It is our prayer, that when we revisit the same passages, the Holy Spirit will give you fresh insight into His truth, and that your soul will be refreshed yet again by the Word of God.

***A note to new Daily Manna readers***

In this book, you will find a reading plan that will guide you through reading the Bible in two years. You will also find a simple exposition based on the reading of the day. From the day’s Bible passages, *Daily Manna* highlights biblical principles which may be applied in the Christian’s daily living. We pray that the *Daily Manna* readings will make your reading through the Bible a more meaningful experience. Over the next two years, our focus will be on the New Testament with the aim of giving you a more in-depth study of the NT books.

***A step-by-step approach***

1. Read the day’s Bible chapters assigned in *Daily Manna*.
2. Review the Bible chapters to get an overview of what you have just read.
3. Read the accompanying devotions in *Daily Manna* and reflect on the lessons learnt.
4. Pray and ask God to help you apply His Word to your life.

Yours in Christ,  
**Pastor Isaac Ong**  
**Calvary B-P Church**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Luke 1:1–25*

### LESSON

**Be true to your calling**

### VERSE 17

*And he shall go before him  
in the spirit and power of  
Elias, to turn the hearts of  
the fathers to the children,  
and the disobedient to the  
wisdom of the just; to make  
ready a people prepared for  
the Lord.*

Luke records a brief life story of a Jewish priest named Zacharias and his godly wife, Elisabeth. This story is not recorded in the other Gospels. It contains a special introduction to the coming Messiah. John the Baptist, who was to announce the coming of the long expected Deliverer of Israel, was born miraculously [Malachi 3:1].

Zacharias was immediately informed by the angel that the child “shall be great in the sight of the Lord” [v. 15]. John was already filled with the Holy Spirit even when he was in his mother’s womb [v. 15]. This is by far many times better than having a child who is beautiful and intelligent. These blessings of God should bring great joy and gladness to any parent of such a child.

The words of the angel also described the exact ministry of John: “And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” How tough can this work be when the nation is under the curse of sin? But the promise is clear: “He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias” [v. 17]. He will bear the same boldness and zeal like his predecessor Elijah [1 Kings 18:21].

Are you feeling anxious and perhaps even disappointed that God has not heard your prayers? God always hears your petitions but He only grants your requests in His own good time. So keep looking up, for soon God will send the blessings down.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 19**  
**LUKE 1:1–25**

### PRAYER

**Lord, let me patiently wait for Your answers to my prayers.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 1:26–56***LESSON****The Holy Spirit, the source of light, comfort and joy****VERSE 41***And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.*

Mary had heard that her cousin Elisabeth was also pregnant with a child. Her visit brought so much joy to the couple that Elisabeth was actually filled with the Holy Spirit. It is sweet to see two holy and like-minded persons who love the Lord dearly communicate and have fellowship. Malachi said: “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” [Malachi 3:16].

What made this visit so special can be found in the elated expression of Elisabeth. Her words [v. 42–43] revealed the deep understanding that she had about the long promised Messiah, the Lord Whom David the king had prophesied in the spirit, the Christ of God [Psalm 110:1]. Doubtless, this divine revelation came about through the act of the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 2:10–12].

Furthermore, it should be noted that when a person is filled with the Spirit, he will begin to bless not only God but good men and women as well [James 3:10]. In the case of Elisabeth, she was ready to speak well of a person much younger than herself. In fact, she felt so unworthy to have the visit of the mother of her Lord [v. 43].

Lastly, she spoke highly of believing faith, which when acted upon will result in the Lord’s divine acts on our behalf for His own glory [v. 45].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 20**  
**LUKE 1:26–56**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, fill me with Your Holy Spirit and take full control of my thoughts and my words.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 1:57–80***LESSON****Understanding God's  
plan****VERSE 68***Blessed be the Lord God of  
Israel; for he hath visited  
and redeemed his people,*

As soon as Zacharias received his speech back, he began to pour forth praises to God for His mercies and kindness. What he spoke about must have puzzled his relatives gathered around. He mentioned a particular prophecy relating to the oldest promise in the Old Testament, the promise of a Saviour. He saw its fulfilment nearing even at the birth of his son, John the Baptist, who would be instrumental in bringing people to a better understanding of their coming Saviour.

He also declared the faithfulness of God, Who will bring His intervention to pass in the person of the Messiah [v. 72–73]. Through Him, God would redeem His people not just from the tyranny of Rome but also from Satan himself.

Christ, the “horn of salvation” [v. 69], is strong enough to deliver whom He will from the bondage of sin. He is also the “Dayspring”, the greater light Who leads one to the way of peace through reconciliation with the holy God [v. 78].

Let us ever rest on the integrity of God, Who never lies. What He has promised, He will bring it to pass. Let us never doubt the words of God, particularly in regard to our future. We are reminded that “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” [Hebrews 6:10].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 21**  
**LUKE 1:57–80**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, grant me the spiritual understanding of  
Your purposes in my life so that I may learn to  
trust in You more.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:1–20***LESSON****Good news from God****VERSE 10**

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

This must certainly be the most marvellous and wonderful of all births! When “God was manifest in the flesh” through the incarnation of the Son of God, it must be the greatest miracle of all time. With the birth of Christ come immeasurable blessings on mankind. It brings the hope of everlasting life for lost humanity. This was the good news that the angel spoke about.

The coming of Christ was especially well-timed. The Jews were under the bondage of a foreign power. They were put under dominion and taxation by these aliens. So the right time has come for a Deliverer to appear and to bring salvation to His people. Indeed, the whole world today is dwelling under the power of Satan and thus in spiritual darkness. Only God can break these powers of darkness and bring light and deliverance to those who will believe in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Although the birth of Jesus was a lowly one, which the world despised and overlooked, for those who would accept Him as Lord and King, they, like the shepherds, will go away with the greatest joy and with loudest praise from now till eternity.

May you appreciate the wonderful way God has worked out for a lost world. He paid the ultimate price for our redemption. It is only through the coming, dying and resurrection of Christ that a sinner can be saved from an eternal hell.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 22**  
**LUKE 2:1–20**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, I thank You for the wonderful plan of Your salvation.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 2:21–52*

**LESSON**

**Humble submission to  
God and earthly parents**

**VERSE 52**

*And Jesus increased in  
wisdom and stature, and in  
favour with God and man.*

One of the earliest records of our Saviour's history was His submission to be circumcised, an ordinance of the Old Testament. Although it was His earthly parents who brought Him to the temple for this purpose, it was not done without the consent of God.

His circumcision, however, does not mean that it was an act of confession of sin on His part, as He is without any original or actual sin [1 John 3:5]. It was to be a testimony to Israel that, according to the flesh, He was a Jew and "made under the law" to fulfil the requirements of the law [Galatians 4:4].

The testimonies of Simeon and Anna are noteworthy. They were both godly individuals who had waited to see the hand of God in Israel. The religion of the nation was then at its lowest. It had been reduced to mere form. The life of true devotion was spoiled by the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus was spoken as "the salvation which God had prepared" for His people and as a "light to lighten the Gentiles". As such, the sudden appearance of the Child Jesus brought hope and joy to their downcast hearts.

Let us be further encouraged to know that our Lord partakes of our human nature except for sin. He has experienced our feebleness and weakness and thus is able to sympathise with us in every stage of our existence. He knows the struggles of boyhood and manhood. He is suited to be our Best Friend.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 23**  
**LUKE 2:21–52**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, thank You for Your willingness to be made like one of us so You know us so well.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 3***LESSON****Fruits worthy of  
repentance****VERSE 8**

*Bring forth therefore fruits  
worthy of repentance, and  
begin not to say within  
yourselves, We have  
Abraham to our father: for  
I say unto you, That God is  
able of these stones to raise  
up children unto Abraham.*

The call for repentance stands out prominently against the backdrop of the redemption drama. In fact, if we consider the Bible as a whole, it is, in its core, a story of man's fall to condemnation and God's call for reconciliation.

Christ died on the Cross to save us from sin. What is required of us is only to accept this gift with gratitude and humility, going to God humbly in repentance and confessing Jesus as our Saviour. The conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Together with it comes the fruit of the Spirit. We see the manifestation of this fruit in this chapter. This can be seen in the daily just acts of the people, the publicans and the soldiers [v. 11–14].

We cannot call ourselves Christians unless we have fully confessed our sins. When this is done, the Holy Spirit transforms our hearts and attunes them to God's will. A change of heart brings about a change in behaviour, as seen from our daily activities, evident to everyone, believers and non-believers alike.

Are you demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit, which is a sign of your repentance? Can others see Christ in you? Do people look at you and see the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? Or are you a stumbling block to others? It might be of God's providence that your actions today would lead someone to Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 24**  
**LUKE 3**

**PRAYER****Dear Lord, make me a blessing to someone today.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 4:1–15***LESSON****Being full of the Holy Ghost****VERSE 1***And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*

Today, we read of the temptations Jesus went through in the wilderness. For 40 days, Satan tried to lure Him—with food, power and even the temptation to tempt God. Yet Christ was never tempted. We read that He was “full of the Holy Ghost” before the 40 days [v. 1] and, after that, He returned to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” [v. 14]. Consequently, “there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about” and He was “glorified of all” [v. 15].

It is noteworthy that the story about the temptation of Jesus follows that of His baptism. Christ was then filled with the Spirit and about to start His public ministry, yet Satan had chosen this particular time of strength to tempt Him.

This serves to remind us that Satan can tempt anyone at any point of his life. One often has the misconception that the evil one only attacks people when they are weak and vulnerable, but this is not the case. David, for example, committed his greatest sin when he was at the height of power. Similarly, a person who is convicted to do God’s work might even face trials and temptations even before he embarks on his very first step.

Let us not be complacent, especially at times when we think God is watching over us and has blessed us abundantly. Perils may lurk in any corner ahead. Let us always be sober and vigilant of the roaring lion that seeks to devour us [1 Peter 5:8].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 25**  
**LUKE 4:1–15**

**THOUGHT**

**Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. – Proverbs 30:8–9**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 4:16–44***LESSON****They need the Gospel,  
too****VERSE 43***And he said unto them, I  
must preach the kingdom of  
God to other cities also: for  
therefore am I sent.*

In today's passage, we read of how Jesus Christ was despised in Nazareth and yet well-received in Capernaum. The people of Nazareth, who were familiar with Him, refused to believe in what He preached and, in their wrath, turned violent, so much so that Christ had to leave them [v. 28–30].

On the other hand, the people in Capernaum were astonished by His powerful teaching [v. 32]. After seeing how He had purged many from evil spirits, the people sought for him to stay. Yet this time round, Jesus was the one Who chose to leave—albeit for a different reason. He knew He had to move on to other cities in Galilee to spread the Gospel.

In both instances, we can see the dangers involved when familiarity sets in. In Nazareth, familiarity had cost the people greatly—their precious Saviour and salvation. If our Lord were to choose to stay in Capernaum, where He was well-received, popular and thus familiar to all, people in other cities would not get the chance to hear the Gospel.

Familiarity often misdirects our emotions. It affects our ability to discern and be attuned to God's will. It causes us to be biased and even resistant to changes. Let us not be too comfortable or even complacent with whatever we are doing now, for many a time this leads to stagnancy in our faith. Instead, let us be conscientious and teachable. Let us always ask God for directions and be ready to go wherever He leads us.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 26**  
**LUKE 4:16–44**

**THOUGHT**

**Familiarity not only breeds contempt; it also breeds complacency. Is your comfort zone impeding you from doing more for Christ?**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 5:1–15*

**LESSON**

**Nevertheless at Thy  
Word I will**

**VERSE 5**

*And Simon answering said  
unto him, Master, we have  
toiled all the night, and have  
taken nothing: nevertheless at  
thy word I will let down the  
net.*

This is the well-known story of how Jesus Christ called His first disciples—the fishermen. In Luke’s account of this episode, which later inspired the popular children’s hymn, “I Will Make You Fishers of Men”, we actually get a close narrative of Simon Peter’s first struggle with unbelief.

A whole night of fishing had proved unfruitful. Simon, together with the rest of the fishermen, was probably feeling tired and frustrated. They had come back to the shore and washed their nets in disappointment. However, after preaching from Simon’s ship, Jesus told Simon to launch out into the deep again to fish. What would your response be if you were Simon?

Simon obeyed Christ nevertheless, calling his friends to follow suit, though not before sharing with Him their tiresome and discouraging night. To his surprise, both ships were filled with so much fish that they began to sink.

“Nevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net.” That was Simon’s mark of obedience. What would have happened if in his unbelief and fatigue, he had refused to set out to the seas? Are you tired in your Christian walk? Do you feel disappointed and discouraged? Have you been witnessing to a loved one for many years and it seems fruitless? Hold on to your faith and press on. Things might seem difficult and there might be many challenges ahead. Yet at the Word of God, we should simply let down our nets in faith and leave the rest to God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 27**  
**LUKE 5:1–15**

**PRAYER**

**... Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. – Luke 5:10b**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 5:16–39***LESSON****Strange things****VERSE 22**

*But when Jesus perceived  
their thoughts, he  
answering said unto them,  
What reason ye in your  
hearts?*

Many of us are familiar with the account of how Jesus healed a man who was taken with palsy. He had seen the man's faith and given him strength to rise up and walk. However, before doing that, Jesus did something that alarmed the scribes and the Pharisees. He forgave the man of his sins. To them, it was blasphemy, as only God could forgive sins.

Jesus knew what they were thinking. He asked them directly, "What reason ye in your hearts?" Soon after, He proceeded to heal the man with palsy. The man arose and departed, glorifying God [v. 25]. With that, all the people were amazed, and they were filled with reverential fear over the "strange things" they had seen that day [v. 26].

We were not told whether all the people there and then believed Jesus was the Son of God and, from thereon, confessed Him as the Messiah. Some would probably have reasoned in this manner. If the scribes and Pharisees were right in saying only God could forgive sins, then surely the Person before them was God. On the other hand, some might consider these "strange things" for a season, only to forget it later.

After the fall of Adam, man's power to reason has become tainted. In fact, one might even be led by one's own will into unbelief. We are utterly depraved and totally out of God's will. Without the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, there is no way our rational faculties can be illumined by the truth.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 28**  
**LUKE 5:16–39**

**HYMN**

**Open my eyes, that I may see, Glimpses of truth  
Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key, That shall  
unclasp and set me free.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 6:1–19*

**LESSON**

**The spirit, not the form**

**VERSE 9**

*Then said Jesus unto them,  
I will ask you one thing: Is it  
lawful on the sabbath days  
to do good, or to do evil? to  
save life, or to destroy it?*

The first part of Luke 6 is on the Sabbath. There are two incidents of contention here: (a) Is it lawful to do work in preparation for eating when one is hungry on the Sabbath Day? (b) Is it lawful to do good and save lives on the Sabbath Day?

The two answers from our Lord were evidently in the affirmative, which made the scribes and Pharisees, respectable people of their times, “filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus”.

Do not misread our Lord’s assertion here, for people have often misunderstood Christ’s saying of “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” [Mark 2:27]. One thing for sure is that our Lord was not suggesting the breaking of the Fourth Commandment. The Sabbath is a day of rest ordained by God for man to rest from work, and for him to focus his attention on God. Once we grasp the principle and spirit behind this, the answers to the questions raised become clear.

There is no reason for us to abstain ourselves from works of necessity and mercy on the Sabbath the same way we should not restrict our communion with God to the days of rest only. The problem with the scribes and Pharisees was that they had held on to the form and overlooked the spirit behind the institution of the Sabbath. By so doing, they became inflexible. No wonder they reacted to Christ’s teaching with such hostility.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 29**  
**LUKE 6:1–19**

**THOUGHT**

**Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. – 2 Corinthians 3:17**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 6:20–49***LESSON  
GOOD FRUIT****VERSE 43**

*For a good tree bringeth not  
forth corrupt fruit; neither  
doth a corrupt tree bring  
forth good fruit.*

In today's portion of Scripture, we can learn many precious lessons in the fruit of our salvation. Interestingly, the Christian worldview is very different from, if not starkly opposite of, worldly values. We see an equivalent to the Beatitudes [v. 20–26] as well as an exhortation for us to love our enemies [v. 27–36] and reasons why we should not judge others [v. 37–42].

In the Beatitudes [Matthew 5:3–12], we read that those who are hungry shall be filled and those who weep shall laugh. This is indeed good news! Yet we are told the converse is also true. The Beatitudes pronounced woes to those who are filled and laughing. Jesus is not against the rich and happy; the warnings go to those who are wealthy but only think of keeping everything to themselves. They have not shown the good fruit of salvation.

The same applies to loving others. If we suffer the hatred of man for the sake of Christ, we shall “leap for joy” [v. 23]. Those who have experienced the love of God should be able to pass this love to others, including their enemies. “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Christians are told to even “bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” [v. 28].

In the presence of the holy God, we are all sinners. Instead of judging and condemning others, we should learn to forgive them as God has forgiven us [v. 37].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 30**  
**LUKE 6:20–49**

**THOUGHT**

**Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. – 1 John 4:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 7:1–35***LESSON****Worthy****VERSE 4**

*And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:*

A beloved servant of a certain centurion was sick and dying. Knowing Jesus could heal, he shared with the elders of the Jews to seek Christ's help. However, when the latter came to Jesus, they exposed their lack of understanding in the work of Christ. They had asked Him to save the servant because his master was a "worthy" man, their rationale being "for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue" [v. 5].

By the standards of these leaders, or even those of the present world, this centurion was a worthy man. However, in the eyes of the holy God, all our 'noble' works of righteousness are but filthy rags. Nevertheless, Jesus went with them [v. 6], though for a different reason.

What happened next probably shocked the elders. The centurion, a man of authority, deemed himself not worthy of having Christ in his house. He even thought he was not worthy of Christ condescending to meet him.

However, it was not his humility that saved the life of his servant, for if it was so, the centurion would still have earned this privilege through works. The reason for this was totally because of his faith. The centurion had said, "But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed" [v. 7b]. Jesus heard, marvelled at him and told the people, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" [v. 9b]. And indeed, by His mere word, the servant was healed.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 31**  
**LUKE 7:1–35**

**THOUGHT**

**For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. – Romans 1:17**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 7:36–50***LESSON****Immeasurable grace****VERSE 47**

*Wherefore I say unto thee,  
Her sins, which are many,  
are forgiven; for she loved  
much: but to whom little  
is forgiven, the same loveth  
little.*

The difference between works and grace is clearly illustrated in today's lesson. The woman, who was most likely a prostitute, had shown great love and adoration for our Lord by anointing His feet with precious ointment using her hair. The Pharisee was surprised to see Jesus allowing a sinful woman to touch Him. Simon, who was around, was probably perplexed. Jesus interrupted His disciple's thought by telling him an illustrating parable [v. 39–40].

Jesus knows every heart. He saw that the woman was not trying to earn forgiveness of her sins by doing that. Instead, it was her love for Christ that had compelled her to do it. She must have been very sorry for all her sins and knew that pardon would need immeasurable grace. She was literally washing Jesus' feet with tears.

She was eventually forgiven of her sins [v. 48]. It is our greatest consolation that God is willing and able to forgive our sins as long as we go to Him in repentance.

The question is thus, is there anyone who has little to be forgiven? If one says yes to this question, then one would have misgauged the extent of one's sins. God is holy and our smallest sin is as obvious as a small black spot in a piece of clear white sheet. What an abomination it must be in the eyes of God! Yet such is God's grace that He pardoned us of our sins. Having been forgiven much, what excuse can one muster for loving little?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES I**  
**LUKE 7:36–50**

**THOUGHT**

**And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. – Ephesians 3:19**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 8:1–21***LESSON****Whosoever hath****VERSE 18**

*Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*

Today's reading covers the well-known parable of the sower. We read of the four different possible responses of people to the Gospel through the parable [v. 5–8] and its explanation [v. 12–15].

At first glance, “accepting Christ” or “receiving Christ”, as we commonly use the term for someone who professes Christ as his Saviour, seems an act of man's free will. However, if we understand the sovereignty and providence of God, this would at best be understanding salvation in a phenomenal sense. The truth is, God has, before time, predestined certain chosen people to be His children.

We can never decipher the mystery of this election; we are never told to do so anyway. What we are commanded to do is spread the Gospel faithfully and leave the rest to God. It is not our job to judge who should be saved and who should not.

Sometimes, we may think someone is saved, only to see him going back to his old ways after the initial zeal is over. He may have confessed Jesus as his personal Saviour but as time passes, we fail to see the fruit of the Spirit in him. How do we understand this? The man may have backslidden or he may not have truly believed in the very first place. If it is the former, our duty is to lead him back to Christ. If it is the latter, our job is to continue telling him the truth of the Gospel.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 2**  
**LUKE 8:1–21**

**THOUGHT**

**For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. – 1 Corinthians 1:21**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 8:22–39***LESSON****Christians are not  
exempted from trials****VERSE 23**

*But as they sailed he fell  
asleep: and there came  
down a storm of wind on  
the lake; and they were  
filled with water, and were  
in jeopardy.*

Storms are not fun—either at sea or in real life. Yet we learn lessons through storms that we never would learn if life were always calm. Right now, everything seems smooth. Then, without warning, you are in the middle of a crisis. In a boat, storms hit those with Christ as well as those without Christ. Just because you are in Jesus’ boat is no guarantee that it is smooth sailing all the way.

Often, a crisis shows us a side of ourselves we were once blind to. The Lord uses it to reveal new areas where we need to learn to trust Him. Knowing our weaknesses makes us rely on the Lord’s strength. Storms show us things that we don’t see in calmer times.

“With Christ in the vessel, you can smile at the storm.” There is a sense in which this is true. But we need to face the fact that sometimes Jesus does not calm the storm. Sometimes, the boat does sink, even if we trust in Jesus. Do not wait until the storm hits. Trust Him daily in the small problems you face. Then, whether He instantly calms the storm or your boat sinks, you will know peace that the world cannot know—the peace that comes from trusting in Jesus, the Lord over all of life’s storms.

Faith in the Lord is not automatic. If you actively trust the Lord Jesus in your current trial, your faith will be strengthened to trust Him even more in the next storm.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 3**  
**LUKE 8:22–39**

**THOUGHT**

**If you do not spend time with the Lord in the calm of life, you will not know how to trust Him in the storms.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 8:40–56***LESSON****Overcoming hindrances  
to faith****VERSE 50**

*But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.*

At some point in our lives, we face fearful situations where we do not know what to do. Jairus' situation shows us that it is easy to drift off course in life and spend our time on things that are not in line with our priorities.

Yet, we seldom stop and think about things until a crisis arises. Worldly success does not insulate anyone from tragedy. Often it is when disasters stare us in the face that we are reminded that our love for God and for others is the only thing worth living for. We do not trust God as we should until we are forced to trust Him—when we are suddenly reminded that we must get right with God.

You may be facing a fearful situation now—a difficult marriage, a rebellious child, a personal health problem, the loss of a job or a financial setback. Whatever your circumstances, it can be of great benefit if you let it clarify your priorities, strip away your pride and move you to trust in Jesus so that He can be glorified through it.

There will be hindrances and setbacks that can shake your confidence in God. But you must overcome them and cling to the Saviour. Just as He called Jairus to faith in the face of fear, so He calls us. However fearful your situation, Jesus says, “Fear not: believe only.” He wants you to move from fear to faith in Him. Jesus is the only One Who can calm our fears.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 4**  
**LUKE 8:40–56**

**THOUGHT**

**Does faith require us to believe that Jesus is going to answer all our prayers affirmatively, or is it enough to believe Him whatever the answer?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 9:1–17***LESSON****Experiencing God's  
sufficiency****VERSE 12**

*And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.*

Many of us make the mistake of thinking that serving Christ is voluntary work when we have adequate time, energy and financial resources. We make up excuses about what we do not have, failing to offer to Jesus what we do have. Jesus did not use all the bread in “the towns and country round about”, which the disciples did not have. Instead, He used the five loaves and two fish that they did have.

In the same way, Jesus does not ask you to give Him what you do not have. He only asks you to give Him what you do have. The Lord does not want our adequacy; He wants our inadequacy so that He can supply the adequacy. He puts His treasure in our weak, earthen vessels so that any extraordinary power is clearly from Him, not from us.

Jesus does not work through people who choose to serve. He works through His servants. He uses tired and emotionally drained people; He uses busy people; He uses people who lack resources. He may not call you into fulltime ministry. But if you have tasted His mercy, He will call you to serve Him in some way.

He wants to use you to give the Bread of Life to those who are hungry. The requirement is that you see how inadequate you are to do anything for Him. Yield your inadequacy to Him and ask Him to use you as He pleases. He will use you to help meet the needs of a hungry world. And He will give you a basket full of leftovers for yourself.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ECCLESIASTES 5  
LUKE 9:1–17**

**THOUGHT**

**Our feelings of inadequacy are opportunities for spiritual growth, for dependence on God and for God to display His power through us.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 9:18–36*

**LESSON**

**Daily self-denial**

**VERSE 23**

*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

Notice that our Saviour never compelled anyone to follow Him. His disciples were free to choose to be His follower. However, we must follow Him on His terms, namely, in self-denial, Gospel-suffering and Gospel service all the time. As His followers, we must be prepared to crucify the flesh, overcome the world and resist the devil on a daily basis.

The Christian faith is much more than mere church-going and a decent attendance at worship. Our crucified Saviour does not accept a self-pleasing, self-indulging and worldly-minded people. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” [Galatians 5:24].

Jesus wanted the multitude and His disciples to learn the lesson of self-sacrifice. There must be this willingness to part with all earthly comforts and pleasures for the sake of Christ when called thereunto. The patient bearing of the Cross is the duty of every true believer. Jesus also stressed the value of the soul [v. 25]. One can possess the world but lose one’s soul, gaining nothing spiritually. The loss of a soul is for eternity. It is to lose God, Christ, heaven and glory for all time. It is to be cast away forever into hell.

Note two basic commands for the disciples: to deny oneself and take up the cross daily. Ministry is not a matter of power and privilege but of humility and service. Jesus made a similar commitment Himself when He turned down Satan’s offer of all the power in the world [Luke 4:5–8].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 6**  
**LUKE 9:18–36**

**THOUGHT**

**The essence of discipleship is humility before God, expressed in self-denial.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 9:37–62***LESSON****Demands of discipleship****VERSE 62**

*And Jesus said unto him,  
No man, having put his  
hand to the plough, and  
looking back, is fit for the  
kingdom of God.*

Three prospective disciples wanted to follow Jesus but lacked the required commitment. The first disciple offered to follow wherever Jesus went, with no excuses [v. 57]. He came to Jesus on his own accord and offered to be a disciple unconditionally. He obviously spoke without much thought and had not counted the cost of discipleship. Hence our Lord replied him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” [v. 58].

Jesus invited a second disciple to follow Him but he had family obligations [v. 59]. His request to bury his father was in itself harmless but the Lord’s work demanded immediate attention. The Lord rebuked him [v. 60].

The third disciple volunteered to follow Jesus but he had a family concern that stood before his desire to follow Jesus [v. 61]. He had a divided heart and was not fully committed to serve Christ. Our Lord commented that he was not qualified to be a disciple [v. 62]. Following Jesus is a priority that takes precedence over everything and everyone.

Jesus had to use harsh words to teach the demands of discipleship. Loyalty to Jesus must take priority over family and personal ambitions. While Elisha was allowed to bid farewell to his parents before following Elijah [1 Kings 19:19–21], Jesus forbade this to affirm the precedence of His right to obedience over all other claims. Jesus warns that to turn back from following Him is to be unworthy of discipleship.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ECCLESIASTES 7**  
**LUKE 9:37–62**

**MEDITATION**

**Remember Lot’s wife who looked back to the worldly life in Sodom and was judged with death [Genesis 19:26].**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 10:1–16*

**LESSON**

**Plentiful harvest**

**VERSE 2**

*Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

The Great Commission was given by our Lord to His 70 disciples to spread the Gospel to the multitudes. There are many unsaved souls in this world who need to hear the Gospel but God’s labourers are few.

The Lord teaches us here that it is important to pray before we set out to do His work [v. 2]. Prayer is one of the most essential and powerful tools of expanding God’s kingdom. Always remember to intercede for those who are in the mission field harvesting souls for the Lord.

Pray for the unsaved. Pray for more believers, including yourself, to be willing to be trained and sent to do missions work. The Apostle Paul also urged the Ephesians to pray in the spirit on all occasions and asked the Lord to give him the courage and wisdom to speak boldly in order to preach the Gospel [Ephesians 6:18–20]

Destruction would be the consequence for stiff-necked people who reject the Gospel. Their guilt will be greater than Tyre and Sidon. Fire rained on the Sodomites when they rejected Lot’s warning, but rejecting the Gospel is a greater sin. Pray for your unsaved loved ones. Pray that they are not like Korazin and Bethsaida, who heard the good news but were indifferent. Pray that the Word of God will be sown in the hearts of those who hear it. There is a great urgency to convert unsaved souls as “the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” [v. 9].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 8**  
**LUKE 10:1–16**

**THOUGHT**

**Do you have the desire to receive this Great Commission from God and be like the prophet Isaiah who said, “Here am I, send me” [Isaiah 6:8]?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 10:17–42***LESSON****The true source of our joy****VERSE 20**

*Notwithstanding in this  
rejoice not, that the spirits  
are subject unto you; but  
rather rejoice, because  
your names are written in  
heaven.*

The 70 disciples returned to the Lord Jesus with pride and joy after their first mission trip, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.” It is important to give all glory and honour to the Lord for every soul saved and every spiritual battle won in His name. We are reminded against self-righteousness. Do not let the seed of pride take root in your heart. All power and might come from the Lord.

The Lord directed His disciples to turn their joy in the right channel. Do not rejoice just because evil spirits are subjected unto you. Do not rejoice thinking it is your own talent that converted unsaved souls. Rejoice because you have been chosen by our gracious and loving God to be His child through faith.

Rejoice in good times and bad times, regardless of circumstances. The greatest joy comes from knowing Christ and inheriting eternal life. We are assured of the ultimate victory over Satan as only the Lord has the authority and power to overcome the works of darkness and evil [1 John 2:13–14].

We also learn here that we must have the child-like simplicity and purity of faith to receive spiritual truth. Let us strive to be humble. Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance to do His will. Strive to be a good child of God, showing meekness and charity, faith and goodness. Let us bear fruit for the Lord. We must let others see the love of God in us.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 9**  
**LUKE 10:17–42**

**PRAYER**

**Dear heavenly Father, I pray that You would search my heart, remove my sinful pride and self-centeredness so that I will be more Christ-like.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 11:1–13***LESSON****The Lord's Prayer and the Holy Spirit****VERSE 13**

*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. In doing so, we may address God as “our Father” because we have been reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. In prayer, we must praise and adore God wholeheartedly, and pray for God’s will to be done. Pray also for the power of Satan to be cast down and more souls to be converted.

God is merciful, gracious and forgiving towards sinners like us and He expects us to treat others the same. We should not hold grudges against others, but pray for God’s love to transform us so that we can love and serve one another.

Last but not least, pray for the strength and wisdom of God to help us do the right things not to fall into temptation and to protect us from evil.

Jesus teaches us to be persistent and confident in our prayer [v. 5–13]. The first parable was about a man persistently (and almost shamelessly) begging his friend for bread at midnight. He refused to give up until his request was granted. In the second story, Jesus demonstrated that an earthly father would not give his children gifts that are harmful but provide good gifts. Similarly, our heavenly Father knows what is good for us and what keeps us away from things that are detrimental to our spiritual life. Our Lord God is good. The best gift He has for you is the Holy Spirit, so that you may have His joy and peace.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 10**  
**LUKE 11:1–13**

**PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your greatest love and grace. May my thoughts, speech and actions be pleasing to You, always.

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 11:14–36***LESSON****Keeping God's Word****VERSE 28**

*But he said, Yea rather,  
blessed are they that hear  
the word of God, and keep  
it.*

Jesus pointed out that it was not sufficient to remove evil thoughts and bad habits from our lives [v. 24–26]. Our hearts must be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. If we leave our hearts vacant or fill them with the wrong desires, we can end up being in a worse state.

As Christians, we need to let Christ be the Master of our lives. We should draw nearer to God, read His Word daily, pray for His direction and be submissive to Him. Surrender totally to Christ, let Him be the ruler of our hearts and let the Holy Spirit guide every aspect of our lives.

We also learn that those who hear God's Word, keep and heed what they have heard, will be blessed. It is important that we do not only hear and agree but also obey and put them into practice. Faith comes from hearing and believing in God's Word. In faith, we respond to what Christ instructs us to do, and keep trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. We should pray for His wisdom daily and let His light shine on us. When you apply the words of the Lord in your life, you will be blessed [Proverbs 1].

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” [Matthew 7:26–27].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES II**  
**LUKE 11:14–36**

**PRAYER**

Lord, your Word is life for us. I pray that I will not just hear your Word today, but that I will also keep it.

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 11:37–54***LESSON****Spiritual cleanliness****VERSE 52**

*Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*

The Pharisee who invited Jesus to his house for dinner commented that Jesus did not wash his hands before eating. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for merely following the Law outwardly but ignoring spiritual cleanliness. They meticulously followed the tithing rules but did not truly love God. They loved authority and fame but did not have a pure heart.

Jesus chastised the religious leaders and scribes for taking away “the key of knowledge”, as these law experts had interpreted the Scriptures wrongly and added man-made rules. In doing so, they not only shut their own doors to heaven but also hindered others from entering the kingdom of God. Mere outward compliance to religious rules does not lead to eternal life. Do not be a cup that is clean on the outside but filthy with wickedness on the inside, “for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” [1 Samuel 16:7b].

Jesus also condemned the scribes as hypocrites, as they loaded the people with burdensome rules but failed to show love and mercy to those who needed their help. They let their self-righteousness replace the humility and charity required by the Lord. In their spiritual blindness, they had failed to recognise the real Messiah.

Let us be genuine and sincere in our worship of God. Pray that you will have the mind of Christ, practising humility and showing charity to others. Watch and pray against hypocrisy.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ECCLESIASTES 12**  
**LUKE 11:37-54**

**PRAYER**

**Dear Lord, please keep my heart pure and fill it with Your love. Give me the courage and wisdom to act with charity and kindness, mercy and humility in all that I do and say.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 12:1–21***LESSON****Quenching the Holy Spirit****VERSE 10**

*And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.*

Today's lesson can be broadly divided into three categories: to be careful lest Satan hinders you [v. 1–12], to be confident because God will not fail you [v. 13–34] and to be consistent in preparing for Christ's return [v. 35–59].

Jesus was warning the multitude against hypocrisy and sin when he was interrupted by a man asking Him to be a judge over his inheritance [v. 13]. Jesus rebuked that man and told the multitude a parable instead. The parable teaches us not to fix our eyes on material wealth and gain, but on Jesus instead. We should not be greedy and occupy ourselves with the wrong things. Instead we should focus on godly things for we don't know when we will die.

Jesus also spoke about the unpardonable sin of trespassing against the Holy Spirit [v. 10]. This is not to be misinterpreted that sinning against Jesus is all right. Jesus was talking about those who were dead towards God. The Holy Spirit no longer strives with them. The man who worries lest he has committed the unpardonable sin is the one man who has not, as that is precisely the evidence that the Holy Spirit is still working in his heart.

Let us pursue the godly things in life rather than the material, and continue to be steadfast and watch for Jesus' coming. In so doing, let us not quench the Holy Spirit.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**SONG OF SOLOMON I**  
**LUKE 12:1–21**

**PRAYER**

Dear God, help me in my pursuit of holiness.

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 12:22–40***LESSON****Watch and pray****VERSE 40**

*Be ye therefore ready also:  
for the Son of man cometh  
at an hour when ye think  
not.*

In this passage, Jesus tells us not to do, or even consider doing, certain things, as God will provide for us. It tells us we are more valuable to God compared to the examples given. The latter part tells us to watch for Jesus' coming [v. 40], like good servants watching for the return of their master.

These verses were meant to teach the folly of excessive worry—God's children should never be over-anxious about daily subsistence. However, they should never be taken out of context. These words should not be taken as a licence for negligence. There are people who take this literally and do not work but expect God to send them all their daily needs. This is wrong.

Jesus uses the analogy of good servants waiting for their master to return [v. 36–40] to illustrate an important lesson. Like all good servants, we ought to wait for our Master to return, and be ready when He does, not sitting around and doing nothing. We should live our daily lives but be vigilant at the same time. Being vigilant prepares our heart and mind.

We are constantly told to watch and pray [Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; Colossians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:7] so that our hearts and minds are clear and sober. Rather than filling ourselves with constant and excessive worry, which muddle the clarity of our minds and disturb the peace in our hearts, we should rather be watchful and prayerful.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**SONG OF SOLOMON 2**  
**LUKE 12:22–40**

**HYMN**

**Watch and pray that when the Master cometh,  
If at morning, noon, or night,  
He may find a lamp in every window,  
Trimmed, and burning clear and bright.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 12:41–59***LESSON****Higher expectation for a Christian****VERSE 47**

*And that servant, which  
knew his lord's will, and  
prepared not himself,  
neither did according to his  
will, shall be beaten with  
many stripes.*

Jesus' teaching was interrupted a second time [v. 41]—by Peter. In response, Jesus did not answer his question personally but continued His sermon on the need for us to watch for His return. He then spoke about His purpose on earth, which would inevitably bring divisions to families. Lastly, He rebuked the hypocrites who pretended to be holy but refused God Himself.

Jesus did not answer Peter directly probably because He saw this teaching as applicable to more people. Thus, He spoke to all men, telling them to watch and work. “Watching” prepares the soul and “working” brings more people into the fold.

Christ differentiated between those who knew His will and those who did not [v. 47–48]. Greater expectation is required of those who know His will. However, this does not mean that those who do not know Him are spared. When a man ignores the knowledge of God, he is responsible for his indifference. Christ came to destroy the works of darkness and purify the people who would be won through His death. Hence, he is divisive in the sense that Christians are to cleave to Him, and even to the point of separating from family members who do not believe in Christ.

Lastly, we ought to watch ourselves from becoming hypocrites who, though outwardly professing the holy God, reject Him, especially after we have experienced Him in our lives. We will be judged accordingly then.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**SONG OF SOLOMON 3**  
**LUKE 12:41–59**

**REMINDER**

**Christians are responsible to know Christ!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 13:1–22***LESSON****Working on the Sabbath****VERSE 15**

*The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?*

This section contains two key lessons. First, a sinner is lost and undone unless he repents. Second, one is to use sound judgement when considering whether to work on the Sabbath.

In the first lesson, Jesus gave two examples in His sermon: one about the Galileans whom Pilate was out to kill and the other about a stone tower that fell on some 18 people when they were working on it. Both sets of people suffered not because they had committed greater sins. The main point Jesus was making here is that anyone can suffer the same fate and is thus doomed for destruction, unless he repents.

The second lesson deals with the issue of working on the Sabbath. Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath. But instead of marvelling at the miracle and praising God for His work of grace, the hypocritical Jews took occasion to discredit Jesus by accusing Him of going against God's laws. This was quickly countered when Jesus made them reflect on their own actions on the Sabbath.

The Fourth Commandment demands us to keep the Sabbath holy. What does that mean? It simply means that the Sabbath is set apart for God's use and not for our own pursuits. That said, there is work that still needs to be done even on the Sabbath, such as those done by policemen, firemen, doctors and nurses. These are the works of necessity. Christians must determine and plan, and pray for grace to keep the Lord's Day holy.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**SONG OF SOLOMON 4**  
**LUKE 13:1–22**

**QUESTION**

**Do you really need to work on the Sabbath or do you actually choose to?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 13:23–35***LESSON****Accepted into heaven****VERSE 25**

*When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.*

Someone asked Jesus if only a few of all men would be saved. Jesus did not mince His words in His reply. He used the word “strive”, which expresses the difficulty of attaining salvation—as if one would have to work very hard.

Some of us will be severely distraught to discover after death that we are not accepted into Heaven [v. 27]. This is mentioned in the parable of the master not letting some of his servants in, giving the reason that he does not know them. “Know” means to “have a relationship with” and not merely “recognise”. These people ate and drank with the master but they did not have a relationship with Him. Likewise today, there are people who may be born into a Christian family or have attended church. But until they are born again and have a personal relationship with Christ, they remain outside the kingdom of God.

Certain Pharisees tried to warn Jesus to flee from that place, as Herod was seeking His life. But Jesus was not intimidated at all. Despite all circumstances, we see our Lord fixed on doing His work of spreading the Gospel.

Let us reflect on our lives and the work we are doing for Christ. What have we done right and what have we not done? Do we want to be readily accepted by the King of heaven or do we want to risk being excluded because God does not know us?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**SONG OF SOLOMON 5**  
**LUKE 13:23-35**

**REFLECTION**

**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? – 2 Corinthians 13:5**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 14***LESSON****Sharing our blessings  
with those in need****VERSE 13**

*But when thou makest  
a feast, call the poor, the  
maimed, the lame, the  
blind.*

Inviting someone to dinner is a gesture of hospitality, and being invited to dinner is both a blessing and a delight. Indeed, it is more blessed to give than to receive. As Christians, we should heed the Master's command here to open our house not only to our friends and loved ones but also to those who are in need, especially to those who are of the household of faith [Galatians 6:10].

However, the command does not apply only to inviting someone to a feast. In the larger context, our Lord is saying that if we have been blessed by God, and have excess, we should avail these excesses to those who are in need. These could be anything—money, food, clothing or shelter. A Christian I know personally is herself a widow and lives in a humble apartment. She is retired and has an extra room that neither she nor her son needs. She opens the room to strangers who have just arrived in the country and are looking for work. Sometimes, she even lets them use the room for free if they have not found work yet. At the same time, she invites them to church and, through her testimony, the gospel of Christ is preached.

Beyond the physical excesses, Christ also commands us to make available the spiritual blessings that we have received. How do we do this? By sharing our faith and by preaching the Gospel to those who are still strangers to God.

Our faith must be followed by much works, because faith without works is dead also.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**SONG OF SOLOMON 6  
LUKE 14**

**CHALLENGE**

Read James 2.

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 15***LESSON****Repentance****VERSE 17**

*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

In the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin, there is rejoicing in finding that which was lost but then found. Our Lord likened this to the joy that is felt when even one sinner repents of his sins. Note also that it is God Himself Who actively looks for the lost sinner and brings the sinner back to Himself. Therefore, repentance is the work of God in the heart of the sinner.

The next parable—the one of the prodigal son—describes in detail the nature of true repentance. After wasting away his inheritance, the son was in want, and had to feed swine to support himself. After some time, he came to himself and realised that he had been foolish and had sinned against heaven and before his father. His attitude was completely changed, and he felt unworthy even to be called his father's son. All he could do was to return and offer himself to work as his father's servant.

God is in control of all circumstances. In the case of the prodigal son, it took a famine and dire straits before he humbled himself in repentance. Similarly, we can also use our circumstances to testify for the Lord. It could be a death in the family or a natural calamity. In all these circumstances, we thank God for restoring us to Him.

Having been restored, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us [Hebrews 12:1b].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**SONG OF SOLOMON 7**  
**LUKE 15**

**THOUGHT**

**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 16:1–18***LESSON****Stewardship****VERSE 10**

*He that is faithful in that  
which is least is faithful  
also in much: and he that is  
unjust in the least is unjust  
also in much.*

A steward is a servant who is entrusted with his master's wealth, to be cared for and managed prudently. An unjust steward is therefore one who had not cared for his master's goods but wasted them instead. Such a person is unsuited for the work of a steward. His sloth is ground for instant dismissal. This is the premise of the parable in today's passage.

The steward, before his dismissal, was asked to give an account of his master's wealth that had been entrusted to him. To save his own future, the unjust steward sought to win the favour of his master's debtors. When his schemes were found out, his master had commended the unjust steward for his shrewdness. This is not an approval of the sin he had committed but an observation on the astuteness of unbelievers when it comes to taking care of themselves.

As Christians, we also are stewards of God, and we are to care for the gifts and blessings that He has bestowed upon us. Let us not be like the unjust steward who wasted God's gifts and blessings. And yet there is a lesson to be learnt from the master's commendation of the steward, and it is that in our spiritual stewardship, we are to be as diligent, and fervent and as wise as the children of this world.

Whatever talents or gifts we have, we should use them to glorify God and carry out the Great Commission that our Lord has commanded of every believer.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**SONG OF SOLOMON 8**  
**LUKE 16:1–18**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, we need Your strength daily to walk the straight and narrow path that You have commanded us to walk.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 16:19–31***LESSON****The saving power of  
God's Word****VERSE 31**

*And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

The Bible is the very Word of God, which was revealed to us through the inspiration of God Himself. Why does God need to reveal Himself to us? We are a fallen people, and because of our sinfulness, we are no longer able to have a relationship with God. Neither do we have the ability to know God on our own. Without the knowledge of God, we are like the rich man in this parable, gathering and enjoying our worldly possessions and material comforts with little or no regard for those, like Lazarus, who are in need.

What is it that God has revealed in the Scriptures? In the parable, the rich man wants his brothers to escape the torments of hell. Indeed, God's Word is able to save you from eternal damnation in hell.

The Bible reveals the sinful condition of man and God's glorious redemption plan so that sinful man can be restored to Him. The only way back to God is through the sacrifice of God's own begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The rich man wanted Lazarus to return from the dead to witness to his brothers. However, Abraham replied that if they did not heed even the Scriptures, they would not believe even if Lazarus returned from the dead. Similarly, we should also rely on God's Word when we are witnessing to our friends, instead of relying on our own strengths and wits. God's Word will accomplish what man's words fail to do.

**MEDITATION****For the Word of**


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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH I  
LUKE 16:19-31**

**God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. – Hebrews 4:12**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 17:1–19***LESSON****A stumbling block****VERSE 2**

*It were better for him that  
a millstone were hanged  
about his neck, and he cast  
into the sea, than that he  
should offend one of these  
little ones.*

**W**e live in a world that is increasingly alienated from God. Man, because of his sinful nature, is prone to wander from God and to forsake Him. There are those who live just for themselves, without any regard for what others may think of them and, needless to say, they live without any regard for what God thinks of them. In fact, they live as if God does not exist—thinking that they are free to do whatever pleases them.

In the absence of the fear of God, it is easy for one to resort to sinful methods of living. For example, it is easier to tell a lie to avoid difficulty than to tell the truth and face the consequences. It is perhaps also less difficult to steal than work to earn the right to own something legally. As mentioned in the passage today, our Lord warns us that offences will come. It is certain that in our daily lives, we are bound to face temptations. We are to keep watch of our hearts.

However, our Lord also warns us not to be the ones who offend or stumble others. In our daily living, conduct and conversations, we should do what is right, not only because others are watching us but also because God is watching us.

Let our words and actions be ones that reflect the holiness that is expected of us. “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” [1 Peter 1:15].

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 2  
LUKE 17:1–19**

**THOUGHT**

**Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts. – Proverbs 21:2**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 17:20–37***LESSON****The kingdom of God****VERSE 21**

*Neither shall they say,  
Lo here! Or, lo there! For,  
behold, the kingdom of God  
is within you.*

The Pharisees asked Jesus a question, desiring to know about the coming kingdom of God. If they did not believe that our Lord Jesus is the Son of God, why would they ask Him such a question? Perhaps they thought they could expose Jesus as a liar. However, Jesus not only gave them the perfect answer but He also exposed the darkness of their hearts. The kingdom of God is within the heart of anyone who has a right relationship with God.

Unlike the Pharisees, who sought power in the physical kingdom, only one who is spiritually enlightened can see the kingdom of God. Faith is essential when it comes to knowing the kingdom of God.

As Christians, how can we have the spiritual discernment? The only way is to ask God for it. If God did not call us and draw us to Himself, we will still be spiritually blind, like the rest of the world. To be drawn to God, the only way is by the preaching and sharing of God's own Word.

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to us, and only the truths in the Bible can show us the way to walk closer to God. Ask God to guide us as we study His Word each day, "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" [Ephesians 4:14].

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 3–4  
LUKE 17:20–37**

**THOUGHT**

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,  
the evidence of things not seen. – Hebrews 11:1**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 18:1–17***LESSON****Rebuking the self-righteous****VERSE 11**

*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

The Pharisees were the most influential Jewish religious leaders during Jesus' day. They were strict legalists who observed countless restrictive rules and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. They considered themselves the only true followers of God's Laws, and therefore thought themselves to be holier than everyone else. They absolutely despised non-Jews as well as Jews of other sects.

Our Lord Jesus painted a vivid picture of the parable of two men who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee was full of himself and his own goodness. He did not even bother to ask for God's favour and grace. "Self" was a prominent feature of his prayer; he used the personal pronoun "I" five times. He did not pray for others, as he had no interest in them besides pointing out their faults (for being extortioners, unjust and adulterers). He even openly despised the publican or tax collector [v. 11].

In contrast, the publican's address to God was full of humility and repentance. His prayer was short but to the point: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus warns us about the danger of despising others. Contempt is more than being mean-minded. It springs from an assumption that one is qualified to judge and decide who is good. Pride leads to self-deception. Humility helps us see ourselves as we really are—sinners who need God's grace. Our Lord dwells within the humble hearts who recognise their own sinfulness and who acknowledge His mercy and saving grace.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 5**  
**LUKE 18:1–17**

**THOUGHT**

**The Pharisee compares his own flaws not with God's infinite perfections but with the imagined greater flaws of others.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 18:18–43***LESSON****Healing the blind man****VERSE 39**

*And they which went  
before rebuked him, that he  
should hold his peace: but  
he cried so much the more,  
Thou Son of David, have  
mercy on me.*

A blind man was determined to get near the one Person Who could meet his need. He knew Who Jesus was (Son of David, a Messianic title) and had heard of His feats of healing but until now had no means of making contact with Him. It took a lot of courage and persistence for him to get the attention of Jesus over the noise of the crowd around Him. When the crowd tried to silence him, he overpowered them with his emotional outburst and thus caught the attention of the Lord.

This incident of Jesus healing the blind man reveals something important about how God interacts with us. The blind man was determined to get Jesus' attention and was persistent in the face of opposition. Jesus could have ignored or rebuffed him because he interrupted His sermon. However, this man was in desperate need and Jesus was ready to meet him, not only to empathise with his suffering but also to relieve him of it as well.

The blind man knew what he needed from Jesus: "Have mercy on me." He did not come thinking that God owed him anything. All he wanted from Jesus is mercy. Jesus commended the blind man for showing his spiritual sight. He granted him physical sight as well.

Do you recognise your need for God's healing grace and do you seek Jesus out, like the blind man, with persistent faith and trust in His goodness and mercy?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 6**  
**LUKE 18:18-43**

**THOUGHT**

**The blind man, now healed and saved, began to follow Jesus. The way of Jesus became his way.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 19:1–27***LESSON****Rewarding good servants****VERSE 26**

*For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.*

Jesus told a parable of a nobleman who went away to receive a kingdom. While he was away, he left his servants with his money to use it as they thought best. This was obviously a test to see if the servants would be faithful and reliable in their use of the money entrusted to them. In the end, the king rewarded those who were faithful and punished those who sat by idly doing nothing with his money.

This parable reveals the ways God works His plan and purpose with men. God gives His earthly kingdom to those who are ready to receive His Son, our Lord Jesus. He entrusts us with His gifts and grace. He gives us the freedom to use them as we think best. With each gift and talent, God gives us sufficient grace and energy to use them in a fitting way.

God honours those who use their talents and gifts fruitfully. People who neglect or squander what God has entrusted them will lose what they have. Here lies an important message for us—no Christian can stand still for long. We either get more or we lose what we have. We either advance towards God or we slip back.

Our Master has now gone away but will one day return to set up His kingdom. In the meantime, we are commanded to use the gifts He has given to us until He returns. Those who are unfaithful will lose not only their rewards but their stewardship too.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 7**  
**LUKE 19:1–27**

**THOUGHT**

**Those who welcome God into their lives will accept His blessings and build on them to get more.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 19:28–48***LESSON****Weeping over Jerusalem****VERSE 41**

*And when he was come  
near, he beheld the city,  
and wept over it,*

Jesus had been to Jerusalem many times but there was something very special about this particular journey to the city. He deliberately sent His disciples to make arrangements for His arrival. Jesus' earthly ministry centred and culminated in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem means “city of peace”, but its people did not know what peace was. Now Jesus headed for Jerusalem knowing full well what awaited Him there—betrayal, rejection and crucifixion. He knew how that joyful entrance into Jerusalem would result in a mournful procession. He had come to Jerusalem for the last Passover. He was on His way to the cross at Calvary.

“When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it” [v. 41]. Why did Jesus weep for Jerusalem? He wept over the tragedy of a lost opportunity. His lamentation was not for Himself, but for Jerusalem's doom. The Jews who were gathered in the city for the Passover missed the opportunity to be saved from eternal destruction. Their Saviour visited them in person yet they did not recognise Him. Instead of receiving Him, they killed Him.

When God visits His people, He brings peace and justice. If we heed His warnings and respond to His grace with faith, the Lord in His mercy will give us peace. If we delay, even for a moment, we may discover that grace has passed us by. If we reject Him, we will face the consequences. Will the King of glory be welcomed in your heart?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 8**  
**LUKE 19:28–48**

**THOUGHT**

**As the people were singing the hosannas and proclaiming Him the King of Israel, our Lord knew how hollow those praises were.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 20:1–19***LESSON****The parable of the rebellious tenants****VERSE 14**

*But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.*

Jesus was speaking to a Jewish audience who knew that “vineyard” referred to Israel: “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel” [Isaiah 5:7a]. In this parable, the husbandmen (or tenants) represented the Jewish religious leaders. The generous owner (God) allowed them to work in his vineyard but they turned against him. They foolishly thought that if they killed the owner’s son, they could take his inheritance. We can see God dealing with a group of stubborn and rebellious people in this parable. It shows us the ways God deals with His people.

First, God is generous and trusting. The vineyard had everything that the tenants needed to work in. The owner went away and left it to the tenants to make the vineyard fruitful. God likewise trusts us enough to give us the means and freedom to live a fruitful life.

Second, God is patient and just. Not once, but many times the vineyard owner forgave the tenants for their unruly behaviour and evil actions. While the tenants took advantage of the owner’s patience, his justice would finally prevail. “He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others” [v. 16a].

God promises that we will bear much fruit if we abide in Him. He entrusts His gifts and grace to us and gives us work to do in His vineyard—the church. He promises that our labour will not be in vain if we persevere with faith to the end.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 9**  
**LUKE 20:1–19**

**THOUGHT**

**God, the owner of the earth, is longsuffering with rebels but there will come a day of reckoning.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 20:20–47***LESSON****Beware of the scribes****VERSE 46**

*Beware of the scribes, which  
desire to walk in long robes,  
and love greetings in the  
markets, and the highest  
seats in the synagogues, and  
the chief rooms at feasts;*

The scribes, who were the religious experts during Jesus' time, demanded recognition from others for their standing with God. They thought they were more spiritual because of their religious knowledge and long prayers. The scribes were good at projecting their religious image, but Jesus warned His disciples against their kind of religion.

In His denunciation of the scribes, our Lord warned us against three things: the desire for prominence rather than selfless service, the desire for deference rather than serving with humility, and the desire to use one's position for self-gain and self-advancement.

We live in a world that can be dangerous at times. There are violent criminals and suicidal terrorists. There are wars and rumours of wars. But Jesus did not tell His disciples to beware of these things. He told them to beware of the scribes. There are modern-day equivalents to these people: false teachers in churches. Some people become religious leaders not to spread the Gospel but to take advantage of others for their personal gain. We ought to discern truth from error. "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" [1 John 4:6].

Genuine belief means relating rightly to God and to one another in love. God puts His Spirit in us that we may be filled with the joy of His presence, the joy of true worship and the joy of loving others.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 10**  
**LUKE 20:20–47**

**THOUGHT**

**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. – Matthew 7:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 21:1–19***LESSON****Sacrificial giving****VERSE 3**

*And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.*

In this passage, Christ took notice of those casting their gifts into the treasury. He commended the poor widow with her two mites. We also read of His prediction of future events, in answer to His disciples' enquiries concerning them and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Why were the two mites of a poor widow of greater value than all the gold and silver that the rich men cast in lavishly into the treasury? She gave all she had. The others gave something they could afford to spare, which, in this way, was relatively less than what she gave. So it is not the question of giving much or little of our possessions to God but of discovering, by the light of this passage of Scripture, whether we are offering to God a complete sacrifice of ourselves, or substituting for it something which we can afford to part with, but which in comparison with ourselves has little or no value at all.

Anything short of the gift of our all to God is unacceptable to Him. Take for example those who dedicate only part of their lives, part of their affections and part of their interests to His service. Is not this professing to give the superfluity yet retaining the essential?

The words of Christ assure us that we will not lose what we give to God but will instead lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, which will never know diminution but an abiding possession.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 11–12**  
**LUKE 21:1–19**

**THOUGHT**

**We can please God in little, if that little is our all.**  
– Sunday School Chronicle

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 21:20–38***LESSON****Take heed to yourself****VERSE 34**

*And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*

In this passage, our Lord foretells of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the terrible judgement that will follow and the utter dispersion of the Jewish nation. He then spoke of His second coming to judge the world, as predicted in the types and figures in the language of the Hebrew prophets [Joel 2:30, 31; Amos 8:9]. He draws a practical application of this by caution and counsel.

Lest that day of the Lord catches them unaware, Christ cautioned His disciples against excessive eating and drinking, and against worldly cares. The immoderate use of meat and drink oppresses and burdens the stomach. It burdens the heart, not only with the guilt thereby contracted but also by the ill influence that such disorders of the body have upon the mind. They stupefy the senses, making the mind dull and heavy, and unfit for spiritual and religious exercises such as reading, meditation and prayer.

Indeed, inordinate pursuit of the good things of this world, such as what you shall eat or drink, or how you shall be clothed adds anxiety to your life and vexes your spirit.

Let us take heed to these two forms of dangers: sensuality that stupefies the conscience and hardens the heart; and worldly cares that absorb the attention and diverts it from things spiritual and eternal. These cause the mind to be unaffected with those things that are most affecting.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 13**  
**LUKE 21:20–38**

**THOUGHT**

**Materialism wars against our souls in a twofold manner. First, it makes us discontent and envious of others. Second, it leads us to pamper and indulge our bodies so that we become soft and lazy. – Jerry Bridges**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 22:1–20***LESSON****Doing in remembrance of Christ****VERSE 19**

*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

In today's passage, we read of the Jewish authorities' plot to put Jesus to death and of Judas' involvement in it, bargaining to betray Christ. We also see Christ's partaking of the Passover with His disciples, followed by the instituting of the Lord's Supper.

The breaking of Christ's body as a sacrifice for us is commemorated by the breaking of the bread. It was broken and given for us to satisfy the guilt of our sins. This we do in remembrance of His death on the Cross for our sins, making ourselves partakers of Him, and joining ourselves to Him in an everlasting covenant. The shedding of Christ's blood by which the atonement is made is represented by the wine in the cup. It is a sign and token of the new covenant. It commemorates the purchase of the covenant by the blood of Christ and confirms the promises of the covenant made to us.

Our Lord knows that we are in constant danger of forgetting Him, and therefore He enlists sense on the side of faith and trusts to these homely memorials the recalling to our treacherous memories of His dying love for us.

Thus, the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ, a standing evidence of the truth of Christianity, an act by which we profess our faith in His atoning sacrifice, an act of our communion with God, and with our fellow believers. It is intended to lead us to anticipate our Lord's second coming. Let us do this in remembrance of Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 14**  
**LUKE 22:1–20**

**THOUGHT**

**What food luxurious loads the board, When at His table sits the Lord! The wine how rich, the bread how sweet, When Jesus deigns the guests to meet! – CH Spurgeon**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 22:21–38***LESSON****True greatness****VERSE 27**

*For whether is greater, he  
that sitteth at meat, or  
he that serveth? Is not he  
that sitteth at meat? But I  
am among you as he that  
serveth.*

In this passage, Christ discoursed with His disciples concerning the one who would betray Him, who was now present among them. They enquired who the traitor would be but soon disputed among themselves who the greatest among them should be. Christ showed them the sin and folly of behaving like the heathen, exercising their lordship. He commended them on their faithfulness and spoke of the honour that they should receive; as well as foretold the three denials of Peter.

The perception of greatness by Christ's disciples at that time was being most influential, most capable and most considered. However, Christ's ideal of greatness is unlike that of natural man. He displayed by His own example of true kingdom greatness to His disciples by His own humility to serve than to be served. The apostles became great men after Pentecost only because they followed their Master's example.

To some men, greatness consists in physical prowess. To others, it may be the possession of wealth or intelligence. Man has measured greatness by a combination of these forms of power: force, wealth and intelligence—the worldly ideal of greatness. Our Lord, by His own example throughout the whole of His conduct among them, as well as by such a single action, would dissuade from their ambitious views of superiority over one another, and learn of Him Who was meek and lowly, and by love serve one another.

To be like our Lord, we must unlearn the world's current ideals of greatness.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 15  
LUKE 22:21–38**

**THOUGHT**

**Church greatness consists in being greatly serviceable. – Richard Baxter**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 22:39–71***LESSON****Following Christ afar off****VERSE 54**

*Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.*

In this section, we have an account of our Lord's humiliation and suffering. Recorded here is the moving story of Christ's agony in the garden. This is followed by the betrayal of Judas, the three denials of Peter, the mockeries, accusations and condemnation of Christ before the great Sanhedrim council, and His confession to be the Son of God.

Following the shocking night arrest of his Master, Peter, exhausted, sad and shivering, followed from a distance. The sight of Christ, his Master, bound, unresisting and evidently at the mercy of the rulers might have affected his faith. Perhaps he had begun to doubt whether Jesus was what he had thought Him to be. He became ashamed of his Master and hid his allegiance, not so much for fear of bodily harm but fear of ridicule. It would be a wretched thing to be persecuted out of his profession of Christ but it would be worse to be mocked for his belief.

Today, many follow Christ afar off. They don't altogether forsake Christ but seek to avoid danger or ridicule by not keeping too close to Him, thinking that a little distance is safer than perfect nearness. "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" This is often the state of mind of those who begin deliberately to follow Christ at a distance. It is cowardice and unbelief!

Let us begin afresh, come near and keep near to Christ at all times.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 16**  
**LUKE 22:39-71**

**THOUGHT**

**True courage is not the absence of fear—but the willingness to proceed in spite of it. – Author unknown**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 23:1–31***LESSON****The Lamb without  
blemish****VERSE 14**

*Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him.*

In spite of all the accusations levelled by the Jews against Jesus, Pilate could “find no fault” in Him and had sent Him to King Herod. Herod likewise found Jesus guiltless and sent Him back to Pilate. Altogether, Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent three times.

The writer of the Gospel of Luke appears to be emphatic about this point. Our Lord was about to be offered up as a sacrifice for our sins. It was meet and right that those who examined Him should formally pronounce Him a guiltless and blameless person.

The Bible says that it is appointed unto man once to die and after that, the judgement. When your turn comes to stand before God, do you want to be judged according to all your works or would you want the Judge to declare, as did Pilate, “I find no fault in this man”? If you prefer the latter, there is only one way. You must accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour because He is the sinless Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world [John 1:29], including yours and mine. Though your sin is scarlet, it shall be as white as snow.

Such knowledge should trigger a host of possible responses from us but the most basic and logical one should be the one which our Lord told the woman who was caught in adultery: “Go, and sin no more” [John 8:11b].

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 17–18  
LUKE 23:1–31**

**PRAYER**

**Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 23:32–56***LESSON****Blessed assurance****VERSE 43**

*And Jesus said unto him,  
Verily I say unto thee, To  
day shalt thou be with me  
in paradise.*

The account of Jesus' final hours as a man must surely be a great comfort and assurance to all who follow Him. When He was crucified, His first words were: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This reveals His great love for sinners. No sinner is too wicked for Him to save. May His example teach us to return good for evil and blessing for cursing.

The authority and power with which our Lord, even on the Cross, could save souls, and the certainty with which the grant of paradise was made to the thief should further reassure us. If that thief, who had done nothing to deserve His pardon, could find salvation, there is certainly hope for us who love Him and serve Him and try our best to lead victorious Christian lives for Him.

Indeed we need not fear physical death, which can only destroy our bodies but not our souls. In fact, the moment we die, we are absent from the body and present with the Lord [2 Corinthians 5:8]. Like the thief, we will be in paradise on the same day, with no need to spend a single minute in purgatory.

Even the miraculous signs and wonders that accompanied the shedding of Christ's atoning blood on Calvary were designed to help us see that this was no ordinary death; it is the culmination of God's marvellous plan for redemption for this sinful world. It is finished! Hallelujah! What a Saviour! Hallelujah! What a Friend!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 19–20**  
**LUKE 23:32–56**

**THOUGHT**

**O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? – 1 Corinthians 15:55**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 24:1–12***LESSON****He is Risen****VERSE 6**

*He is not here, but is risen:  
remember how he spake  
unto you when he was yet  
in Galilee,*

The Lord Jesus Christ did not just die for your sins. He rose again from the dead, and we who believe in our hearts that God has raised Him “shalt be saved” [Romans 10:9]. The Resurrection is one of the core pillars of the Christian faith. As Paul attests, “if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, then we are of all men most miserable” [1 Corinthians 15].

This chapter directs us to the evidence of the Resurrection. When the women went to the sepulchre, they found the stone rolled away, and they could not find the body of the Lord. Who could have taken Him away? Who had removed it? Surely not the priests, scribes and other enemies of Christ! They would have used it to prove that Jesus was a fraud. Who made this empty claim: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” [John 2:19].

There was also no way that His disciples, who were frightened and demoralised, could have stolen the body from under the guard of elite Roman soldiers. Only one explanation can meet the circumstances, and it was provided by the angels. Christ has risen!

The fact of the Resurrection should give Christians the blessed hope that some day, we too will be resurrected from the grave. We should regard ourselves as being “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” [Romans 6:11].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 21**  
**LUKE 24:1–12**

**CHORUS****He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 24:13–35***LESSON****Are you a fool?****VERSE 25**

*Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*

If our Lord were to join you in a Bible study, would He chide you for your ignorance and lack of faith, as He did His two disciples on the road to Emmaus? Why did Jesus call them fools?

First, they were ignorant of the Scriptures. Second, they allowed circumstances and worldly thinking to distort their understanding of events. This led them to disappointment, discouragement and feelings of defeat. Are we not guilty of this same “foolishness”? Are we not often “slow of heart” to believe the teachings of the Bible? For example, many professing Christians today prefer the teachings of modern-day science, like evolution, to the Biblical account of creation. At home, they adopt “enlightened” methods of bringing up their children, as found in child psychology books, rather than “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”.

Thankfully, the Lord was gracious and patiently “expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself”. And their hearts “burned” within them as their spiritual eyes were opened. Soon, their spiritual appetite was aroused and they hungered for more, pleading with Jesus to “abide” with them.

We can learn some lessons from these two disciples. Let us repent of our own ignorance and careless attitude towards God’s Word, and henceforth resolve to feed on the Scriptures daily. Let the Holy Spirit be our Teacher. Ask Him to “guide you into all truth” and “shew you things to come” [John 16:13]. Let Jesus and His Word abide in you so that you can bear much fruit for Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 22**  
**LUKE 24:13–35**

**THOUGHT**

**As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. – 1 Peter 2:2**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 24:36–53***LESSON****The disciples’  
transformation****VERSE 52***And they worshipped him,  
and returned to Jerusalem  
with great joy.*

**A**fter Christ’s death, His disciples became a weak and defeated band, without a leader. But after their encounter with the risen Saviour, they became victorious, joyful and energised. What brought about this amazing transformation? It was entirely the work of their gracious Master.

First, Jesus “opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures” [v. 45]. He taught them in a patient and even condescending manner. Initially, they were terrified at His sudden appearance. However, instead of chiding them, He asked them to touch Him with their own hands and satisfy themselves that He was a material being, and not a ghost. Finally, they understood God’s eternal plan of salvation: why Jesus Christ had to suffer, die as a man and rise from the dead on the third day. They also understood God’s Great Commission to preach repentance and remission of sins among the nations, starting with their own city.

Although they knew that the road ahead was rough and that they would face opposition, hostility and even death, they were confident because they knew that the battle was the Lord’s [1 Samuel 17:47]. They were merely witnesses. God would give them power from on high. Above all, He gave them “peace that passeth understanding”. Jesus’ very last act, even as He was carried up into heaven, was to bless them [v. 51].

Re-examine your Christian walk. Are you experiencing great joy? Are you continually in God’s house, praising and blessing Him? If not, why?

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 23  
LUKE 24:36–53**

**THOUGHT**

**The joy of the Lord is your strength [Nehemiah 8:10c]. And His strength is also your joy.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 1:1–28***LESSON****Jesus, the Saviour of the world****VERSE 1***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Jesus has no beginning and no end. He is God and has been together with God the Father for eternity. Being eternal means that time has no hold on Him. Jesus is the Word made into flesh [v. 14]. Jesus has to be born as a man in order to be like us [Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:16]. This was necessary because we are all sinners and the penalty of sin is death. But God, in His mercy, sent His Son Jesus to die on our behalf. This is the divine paradox. God could not die, yet Christ—Who is God—died on the Cross, the sinless dying for sinners [Hebrews 4:15].

Because Jesus suffered and died on our behalf, those who believe will have eternal life. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” [John 1:4]. Jesus is the Light and Life. This is the message of John the Baptist, the witness [v. 7–8, 15] and announcer of the Saviour. John knew his place and rightly said so.

Unfortunately there are many today who claim credit for themselves. They glorify their own efforts and claim to have special powers to perform miracles and receive visions from God. In doing so, they rob God of His glory.

Pray that God will give you discernment to know Jesus and worship Him alone. Remember that He is our Saviour. Besides Him there is none else.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 24**  
**JOHN 1:1–28**

**THOUGHT**

**He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. – John 1:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 1:29–51***LESSON****Jesus, the Son of God****VERSE 36**

*And looking upon Jesus as  
he walked, he saith, Behold  
the Lamb of God!*

Jesus acknowledged the declaration of John because He is indeed the Son of God, as well as God Himself. He came in obedience to fulfil God's plan for someone to take our place for the punishment of sin. As the Lamb of God, He is the perfect sacrifice for sinners, being sinless Himself. No man is good enough to represent all humanity. No man is qualified to be a mediator between God and the sinner because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]. Christ Jesus is the only One fit to be the Lamb of God.

Jesus chose His disciples from humble fishermen for a reason. We have to depend on God for provisions and wisdom to do His work. Our secular society, on the other hand, prefers highly educated and smart people to be our leaders. God wants obedient and willing servants to do His work. His first seven disciples were all fishermen, and Jesus knew each of them before they were chosen.

Today, as in days past, there are still people who ridicule God. Jesus came from the insignificant town of Nazareth and the people asked, "What good can come out of that small unknown place?" Jesus was born in the family of Joseph, who was only a carpenter, and they remarked, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" [Matthew 13:55a].

But Christ was not discouraged. His mission was to die as our Redeemer—the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world [v. 29].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 25**  
**JOHN 1:29-51**

**THOUGHT**

**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. – Matthew 28:19**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 2***LESSON****Jesus tells of His resurrection****VERSE 19**

*Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*

After performing the first miracle of changing water into wine, Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem. What He saw was gross sacrilege. The people were selling oxen, sheep and doves. Moneychangers were taking advantage of the people by charging exorbitant exchange rates.

It was taught that only Jewish-minted money could be used in worship. The Roman coin could not be used in the temple because it bore the imprint of Caesar [Matthew 22:15–22]. A temple worshipper had to change his Roman denarii into temple coinage to buy the sacrifice, and then he had to change the money back to the denarii again. The worshipper would lose on both counts on the exchange rate.

Religion, to the moneychangers, was a lucrative business. Our Lord Jesus said the temple had become “an house of merchandise” [v. 16], literally an emporium. The zeal for the house of God caused our Lord Jesus to drive out those merchandisers and moneychangers out of the temple.

Our Lord Jesus further added that if the temple would be destroyed, He would build it up again in three days, though He was not talking about the physical temple but was prophesying about His death and resurrection. He would be the sacrifice for man’s sins so that there would be no need for animal sacrifices henceforth because He is the perfect sacrifice. There would be no reason for religious commercialism and no excuse for religious exploiters because salvation is a gift of God [Romans 6:23].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 26**  
**JOHN 2**

**THOUGHT**

**And I [Jesus] give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. – John 10:28**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 3:1–21***LESSON****You must be born again****VERSE 3**

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

**H**ow can a person be born again? Nicodemus had a hard time understanding that, despite being a very learned man. This proves that spiritual understanding is the work of the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus, however, was patient and humble, and our Lord Jesus explained to him that in order to be saved [to have salvation], one needs to be born again. It is not a physical act, as Nicodemus had thought, but the spiritual working of the Holy Spirit that causes a sinner who believes to receive Jesus into his heart.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” [v. 5]. This is a fact. It is like the rising of the sun—whether you believe it or not, the sun still rises. You may have other ideas and perceptions but your own ideas do not change that fact. The same goes for the Gospel. It is a fact and it does not change, whatever your view might be.

Yet simply agreeing—as you believe in the rising sun—does not mean anything. You need to be born again. Our first birth is natural human process from our mother’s womb; our second birth [born again] is a spiritual one.

The Scriptures is likened unto water. When we believe and put our trust in Jesus as our Saviour [very definitely], God will give us a new birth through the application of His Word.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 27**  
**JOHN 3:1–21**

**THOUGHT**

**For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. – John 3:17**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 3:22–36***LESSON****All our power and  
wisdom come from God****VERSE 31***He that cometh from above  
is above all: he that is of  
the earth is earthly, and  
speaketh of the earth: he  
that cometh from heaven is  
above all.*

As the days passed, the ministry of our Lord Jesus became more popular. This led some of John's followers to show concern for their master. It was a concern that arose out of jealousy. They claimed that many people were following Jesus, so John might lose his place and become insignificant in time.

However, John was clear about his role, which was to announce that Jesus is the Saviour, the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world. John would gladly get out of the limelight because he was only human. He did not need any disciples. He wanted them to follow Jesus, Who is God. John rightly said that he could do nothing except through the power given from heaven. He was only a friend of the bridegroom. The bridegroom is Jesus and He has come to get His bride. The Church [all born again believers] is His bride. John said that he could not save, only Jesus can.

We are all but servants of the bridegroom. All of us can do nothing without the blessings from God. There is no need for Christians to strive and compete to be the greatest. We are all part of the Church and the Bride. We have to work together with a united heart so that we can be used effectively for the glory of God.

Our job is to concentrate on sowing the Gospel seed, and not on making a name for ourselves.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 28**  
**JOHN 3:22–36**

**THOUGHT**

**The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all  
things into His hand. – John 3:35**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:1–26***LESSON****True spiritual homage****VERSE 24**

*God is a Spirit: and they  
that worship him must  
worship him in spirit and  
in truth.*

The purpose of John's gospel is to portray Christ's divine power and authority. It can be seen in Christ's compassionate dealing with the Samaritan woman at the well. After leaving Judaea due to the Pharisees' controversy over the baptism of Jesus and the baptism of John, Christ headed for Galilee by way of Samaria. During Christ's evangelistic discourse with the woman, He explained the true form of spiritual worship.

"God is a Spirit" reveals Christ's infinite being. Unlike man-made idols created by human hands, God is immaterial and not confined to time or space. Man-made religions see the need to worship in human form whereas the Bible refutes idol worship, which is dishonouring to God [v. 24].

Furthermore, Scripture itself declares that God is pure spirit. The true form of worship must be attuned to the spiritual nature of Christ. After stating that the essence of God is Spirit, our Lord taught the Samaritan woman the correct way of paying homage to God. Worshipping God is not confined to a particular place. We can worship Him anywhere, anytime and anyplace.

God is eternal, infinite and omnipresent, just to list a few of His attributes. As His children, we must pay spiritual homage due to our Creator, in the offering of the soul, and not the body, from the heart and not in lip service. Physical distractions and hindrances to worship must be kept at bay. Our minds must not wander off but stay focused on God during a worship service.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 29**  
**JOHN 4:1–26**

**THOUGHT**

**True worship comes from the heart.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:27–54***LESSON****Is seeing always believing?****VERSE 48**

*Then said Jesus unto him,  
Except ye see signs and  
wonders, ye will not believe.*

The Samaritan woman responded positively to Jesus' words [v. 27–42]. Even more surprising was her eagerness to share the good news with her townsfolk. This was in contrast to the negative attitude of the Jews themselves. In the next section, the divine healing of the nobleman's son was the proof of Christ's deity [v. 43–54]. The nobleman not only found physical healing for his son but also spiritual healing for his whole household.

How ironical it is that compared to the Jews, the Samaritans had believed without witnessing any miracle. The truth of "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom" [1 Corinthians 1:22] is proven here. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" was addressed to the nobleman as well as the Galileans. Though our Lord Jesus had wrought many miracles to convince these Jews, they still would not believe, but continually sought to see more miracles.

So seeing is not always believing. This saying is true to the one who has a closed mind. Though these Jews had witnessed many miracles, they were still unconvinced about Christ's deity.

However, God's children must always walk by faith and not by sight. Our human nature causes us to believe in signs and wonders, isn't it? But as God's children, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit results in a life of faith. Our Christian journey here on earth is a progressive walk of faith till we see Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 30**  
**JOHN 4:27–54**

**THOUGHT**

**For we walk by faith, not by sight. – 2 Corinthians 5:7**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 5:1–16***LESSON****Freedom of the will****VERSE 6**

*When Jesus saw him lie,  
and knew that he had been  
now a long time in that  
case, he saith unto him,  
Wilt thou be made whole?*

Superstition ran deep in this passage about the healing powers in the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. Despite the multitude gathered by the pool for instant healing, our Lord Jesus singled out one person to be cured miraculously [v. 1–9]. Yet instead of being glad for that impotent man, the Jewish leaders were displeased with Jesus. They claimed that He had broken the Sabbath law [v. 10–16].

The question, “Wilt thou be made whole?” posed by Jesus to that impotent man seemed ridiculous and even insensitive. However, upon further reading, it reveals the sanctity of the human will. Our Lord never imposes His divine omnipotence and sovereignty upon man in His plan of salvation.

Another reason for Christ’s question was to draw the invalid’s attention to his need for healing. Perhaps the impotent man was so used to his handicap that he did not mind remaining in that helpless condition. The “poor me” syndrome would always raise sympathy from people. Once he was healed, he would have to fend for himself.

On a more personal note, what kind of ailment are you seeking healing from? Could it be an addiction (drug or sex), alcoholism or smoking? All of these stem from the sin of our fallen nature. First John 2:15–17 warns us about the consequences of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. No one can help you if you do not want to be helped. Will you be made whole?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 31**  
**JOHN 5:1–16**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, help me to exercise my free will correctly in the Lord.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 5:17–30***LESSON****Divine authority attested****VERSE 17**

*But Jesus answered them,  
My Father worketh  
hitherto, and I work.*

Christ's reproof of the Jews was shown in this long discourse on His divine authority and deity. The Jews' hostility against Jesus was due to His healing of the invalid on the Sabbath. Furthermore, these Jewish leaders were incensed by Christ's claim to being equal with God. Now they even accused Jesus of blasphemy.

In refuting the Jews' accusations, our Lord attested to God as His witness in three areas. He spoke about God the Father and His lordship over the Sabbath. Just like God, our Lord Jesus was not bound by the law of the Sabbath. "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" [Mark 2:28].

Miracles performed by Christ are proof of His divine being. This can be seen in the unique relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Whatever the Father does, the Son can do likewise, attesting to His omnipotence. God the Son had the same power as God the Father to raise the dead. Moreover, Christ has been given the divine authority to judge the world.

The answer of Jesus teaches us that we should not be afraid to tell the truth out of fear for our own lives. Don't hold back the truth just because it irritates and enrages sinners. Remember, the fault is not in the truth but in the sinner. Moreover, the more sinners hear the truth, the angrier they tend to become. Let us be emboldened in our evangelistic outreach by the courage shown by our Lord Jesus in defending His divinity.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 32**  
**JOHN 5:17–30**

**PRAYER****O Lord, help me to speak boldly for You.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 5:31–47***LESSON****The way to eternal life in Christ****VERSE 39***Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

This final section is a continuation of Christ's discourse, confirming His Messiahship. Besides His own testimony, Christ mentioned other witnesses to attest to His divinity. Verse 31 shows Christ's obedience to the Jewish law. Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15 state the requirement for two or three witnesses to confirm a person's testimony. As such, the Jewish leaders had the right to expect Christ's claim to Messiahship to be confirmed by more witnesses. The Jews had disregarded God the Father's testimony during Christ's baptism [Matthew 3:16–17] and the proof of one's own testimony alone is not decisive enough.

Our Lord pointed these Jewish leaders to the preaching of John the Baptist and Moses to authenticate His deity. Both John the Baptist and, especially, Moses were greatly revered by the Jews. However, more importantly than men was the testimony of Scripture to prove His claim to Messiahship. Here, "Scripture" refers to the Old Testament writings—all the books containing God's revealed will at that time.

As a child of God, it is our duty to search the Scriptures. A diligent and faithful investigation is important because the Word of God reveals Christ's coming, life and death. The Bereans in Acts 17:11 were commended for their daily search of the Scriptures after receiving the Word of God readily. The Holy Scriptures also make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus [2 Timothy 3:15].

Do you belong to a Bible Study group? Make time to study God's Word diligently for therein is the way to eternal life in Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 33**  
**JOHN 5:31–47**

**PRAYER****Lord, grant me the zeal to search the Scriptures diligently.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 6:1–30***LESSON****Gathering up the fragments****VERSE 12**

*When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

Jesus had just fed a large crowd by miraculously multiplying five small barley loaves and two small fish. When the people were thoroughly satisfied, Jesus uttered one of His memorable words to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost” [v. 12]. They were words that rose from the very bottom of His heart, revealing the depths of its tenderness and the impulse of His entire ministry. “Gather up the fragments” reminds us of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son in Luke 15.

The fragments were leftovers, which the disciples had not distributed. Jesus asked His disciples to gather them so that nothing was wasted. They filled 12 baskets with the fragments. One broken piece of bread will not satisfy hunger but many such slices will definitely go a long way.

The “fragments” we need to watch most are the fragments of our time. To Christ, the fragments of time were very precious. He had filled it with work, prayer and rest. A person wasting time throws away not only time itself but also the opportunities and the privileges which that time carries. We should be good stewards of time and use it for God’s glory.

Jesus has love for the “fragments” and insight about their possibilities. The world is full of such “fragments”—whether through sin, poverty, disease, sorrow or misfortune. He knows how precious lives are and how much could be done with them. He came into this sinful world to save mankind.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 34–35**  
**JOHN 6:1–30**

**THOUGHT**

**The man who will gather his sheaves together will doubtless come again with joy.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 6:31–71*

**LESSON**

**Everlasting life**

**VERSE 40**

*And this is the will of him  
that sent me, that every  
one which seeth the Son,  
and believeth on him, may  
have everlasting life: and I  
will raise him up at the last  
day.*

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” [Genesis 2:7]. When this body dies and our earthly existence terminates, the body goes into the ground but the soul lives on forever. The Bible teaches that there is a future life with God for believers who put their trust and faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Our Lord said to those who had no heart for Him, “That ye also have seen me, and believe not” [v. 36]. All that the Father gave to the Son before the foundation of the world “shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” [v. 37b]. This assures the eternal preservation of everyone who truly comes to Christ.

God wills that those whom He has given in trust to His Son shall be presented faultless before the presence of His glory. Those who believe in Him shall have eternal life and be raised up at the last day.

Jesus died to save us from the penalty of sin. We must turn from our sin and cast ourselves wholly and unreservedly on Christ for salvation. The eternity and deity of Christ are to be believed and received with joy and gladness. Life is too short to be treated carelessly. To make the most of our earthly existence, we must lose ourselves in the will of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 36–37**  
**JOHN 6:31–71**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, thank You for eternal life in Christ. Help me to spread this joyous news to those around me.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 7:1–13***LESSON****More than a good man****VERSE 12**

*And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.*

The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. Pilgrims from all over Israel gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate and purify themselves. The Jews sought Jesus at the feast. However, there was general misunderstanding and murmuring. The crowd differed in their sentiments concerning Him. Some said that Jesus was a good man. Very likely there were those in the crowd who had been healed by Him or recalled His teaching given at various times.

Yet others said, "He is a deceiver, He goes around leading people astray by claiming He is God. He teaches people to break the law of Moses by violating the Sabbath!"

Jesus is God's promised Deliverer. More than that, He is God Himself living among us in human form. The doctrine He preaches is sound. His miracles are real. His conversation is holy. He touches lepers and heals every kind of illness. On several occasions He has raised the dead in full view of witnesses. His life is one of serving, healing, teaching and caring for anyone in need. He has demonstrated pure love at all times. Not only is He compassionate, He is also a perfect and good man in every way.

More importantly, He is the One Who has defeated sin and conquered death by dying on the Cross for us and rising from the grave [1 Corinthians 15:1–28, 57]. Because He lives, all who put their faith in Him will live forever with Him [John 11:25]. To those who try to diminish His glory, tell them in no uncertain terms Who the real Jesus is.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 38**  
**JOHN 7:1–13**

**THOUGHT**

**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. –  
Matthew 16:16b**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 7:14–36***LESSON****For the doubtful****VERSE 17**

*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus made a startling claim. He offered the gift of the Holy Spirit—rivers of living water [v. 37–39]. He also claimed to be the Light of the world [John 8:12]. In the middle of the feast, Jesus went public by teaching in the temple. The Jews marvelled, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” The people were asking Jesus to reveal the origin of His teachings.

Jesus declared that His doctrine was from God. “As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” [John 8:28c]. Jesus affirmed that the truth He taught was not conceived in His own mind but received from God. He emphasised that a man who was attuned to the will of God would know His teaching was of God.

If any man earnestly practises what God has revealed, he will surely be able to discern true teachings from the false ones. By reading the Scripture obediently and following Christ, we learn most of Christ. By making Him our way, we discover He is the truth and the life.

Christ summoned His 12 disciples to follow Him. They forsook all and did do. Day by day, they walked closely with Him, observing and learning His works and were astonished at His doctrine. They willed to do the will revealed in Him. The path of humble fellowship, His teaching and miracles convinced them that Jesus is God. Through experience, patient observance and obedience, they learnt their own lessons. Their faith grew as they walked closer with Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 39**  
**JOHN 7:14–36**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, in everything I do, Your will must be uppermost in my life. I, as Your child, trust You to lead me.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 7:37–53***LESSON****Never man spake like this man****VERSE 46***The officers answered,  
Never man spake like this man.*

The officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus were so awed by His teaching and personality that they returned with empty hands. When questioned, they answered simply, “Never man spake like this man” [v. 46].

Jesus Christ came as the long Promised One and while here in the flesh, His sayings, parables and discourses are potential promises. He spoke with wisdom, power, grace and authority. Be it the Sermon on the Mount or any one of His parables, each was a miracle in words. He spoke of pardon, salvation and holiness to any who had an ear to hear. It is indeed true that no one spoke as He did.

The people marvelled when He spoke with the intensity of personal conviction, insights and experience, unlike the scribes, who recited instructions supported by quotations and extracts from ancient authorities. Jesus was very loud in His denunciation of false teachers and hypocrites. He said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” eight times [Matthew 23:13–36], calling them blind guides and fools.

The Prophets and Apostles of the Old and New Testaments had a unique and vital role for the men of their days. They served as God’s spokesmen. They were, however, also men with manifold limitations. They had to authorise their messages with “Thus says the Lord”. But Christ never hesitated to claim direct authority for Himself, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” Indeed, never has a man spoken as He did.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 40**  
**JOHN 7:37–53**

**THOUGHT**

**God speaks through His Word to those who listen with their hearts.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 8:1–30***LESSON****The Light****VERSE 12**

*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible teaches us that light is employed to signify the highest of blessings. In the void before the creation of the world, God said, “Let there be light” [Genesis 1:3] and there was light. In Revelation 22:5, John mentioned that in Paradise, there shall be no need of light or the sun because the Lord will be the Light.

What did Jesus say of Himself? “I am the Light of the world” [John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46]. Yes, He is the foundation of light enlightening every man. Those following Him shall walk in the light of life. Multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles refuse to turn to Christ for forgiveness, redemption and salvation. By rejecting Jesus Christ the eternal Light, these men have chosen to stumble on blindly in spiritual darkness towards destruction, judgement and hell.

Those who observed the life of Jesus remarked, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” [Isaiah 9:2]. Jesus is indeed “the Light of the world”. He is the “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” [John 1:9].

Today, the whole world is stumbling in darkness from one crisis to another. The crises are getting from bad to worse every day. Economic downturn, inflation, corruption, hunger and population explosion are problems that affect most of the world. Many people are living in spiritual darkness, confused and frustrated, disturbed and fearful. Let the Light come into your heart by faith.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 41**  
**JOHN 8:1–30**

**THOUGHT**

**Jesus Christ is the true Light, shining on and into everyone in this world.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 8:31–59***LESSON****Who is a Jew?****VERSE 39**

*They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

The question “Who is a Jew?” addresses a far more reaching question: “Who is a Christian?” There are many who claim to be Christians because they were born into a Christian home. However, upon closer examination, Scripture treats true religion not as something inherited by fleshly descent but as one spiritually obtained by faith.

The Apostle Paul puts it this way, “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” [Romans 2:28–29].

Our Lord, in His exchange with the Jews, dealt a deathblow to the most important claim of the Jews. To the Jews, Abraham was the greatest figure in their religious history, and they considered themselves safe and secure in the favour of God simply because they were physical descendants of Abraham. They believed that Abraham had gained such merit from his goodness that this merit was sufficient not only for himself but also for all his descendants.

However, Paul showed that the promises were made to Christ [Galatians 3:16], not to the physical descendants of Abraham. Unlike Abraham, who welcomed Him [Genesis 18:1–8], the present Jews were trying to kill Him. How could they dare claim themselves descendants of Abraham, when their conduct was so different?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 42**  
**JOHN 8:31–59**

**THOUGHT**

**Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ – Galatians 3:16**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 9***LESSON****Religiosity counts for nothing****VERSE 16**

*Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.*

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 43-44**  
**JOHN 9**

In true religion, ritualism and the observation of its “laws” brings no salvation just as God has spoken, “When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting” [Isaiah 1:12–13].

What is more important is the holy activism of doing good and the condition of one’s heart, “...put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” [Isaiah 1:16–17].

The Pharisees were so engrossed about keeping the Sabbath that they completely ignored the miracle of Jesus making the blind man see. They were more concerned with Jesus having “broken the law” of the Sabbath. They are typical of the people in every generation who condemn anyone whose idea of religion is not theirs. They thought that theirs was the only way of serving God.

The man, when asked before the Pharisees, gave his opinion of who Jesus was without hesitation and without fear: “He is a prophet” [v. 17], and rightly so, because in the Old Testament a prophet was often tested by the signs he could produce [Deuteronomy 18:22]. He knew that if he came out on Jesus’ side he was certain to be excommunicated. But he made his statement and took his stand.

**THOUGHT**

**Jesus is still doing things that seem to the unbeliever far too good and far too wonderful to be true.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 10:1–18***LESSON****Jesus, the true Shepherd****VERSE 16**

*And other sheep I have,  
which are not of this fold:  
them also I must bring, and  
they shall hear my voice;  
and there shall be one fold,  
and one shepherd.*

God is often pictured as the Shepherd in the Old Testament and His people as His flock. “The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want” [Psalm 23:1]. “For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand ...” [Psalm 95:7].

Church leaders who are negligent in their duties are soundly condemned, “Woe be unto the pastors [shepherds] that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord... behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord” [Jeremiah 23:1–2].

The picture of the shepherd is woven into the language and imagery of the Bible. As such, the depicting of Jesus as the Good and True Shepherd is very relevant. This is especially so because Jesus spoke to them using the “shepherd-sheep” parable.

Jesus also makes clear the truth that God is not only exclusively for the Jews [v. 16] but there will come a day when all people of the world [Isaiah 49:6, 56:8] will know Him as the Shepherd. They believed that they were God’s only chosen people and that God had no use for non-Jews. Other ethnicities were at best designed to be their slaves and, at the worst, destined for damnation. However, during Jesus’ earthly ministry, the Gospel was first brought to the Jews, who formed the bulk of the first believers of the early church. But within a short time after the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter testified how the Gospel was opened to the Gentiles [Acts 15:7].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 45–46**  
**JOHN 10:1–18**

**THOUGHT**

**Read Acts 15:8–9.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 10:19–42***LESSON****Jesus, the Son of God****VERSE 35**

*If he called them gods, unto  
whom the word of God  
came, and the scripture  
cannot be broken;*

The Jews acknowledged the miracles of Jesus, yet they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God. To this, our Lord answered them [in a paraphrase], “It is written in the Scriptures that God said to certain leaders of the people, ‘I say, you are gods!’ And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God’s message were called ‘gods,’ why do you call it blasphemy when I say, ‘I am the Son of God?’”

The force of Jesus’ argument is based on Psalm 82. This psalm deals with the human judges of Israel. These judges were called “gods” in this Psalm because they were acting on behalf of God and He was always in their midst when they were performing their duties.

The reasoning is that when fallible men serving as judges were called “gods”, how can Jesus be accused of blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God? He was set apart by God and sent to do the work of God. He existed before He came to earth. He came from God. He was sent of God. He was one with God. This, without doubt, is a claim for the sharing of deity with the Father.

He invited the Jews to base their verdict on Him, not on what He said, but on what He did.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 47**  
**JOHN 10:19–42**

**THOUGHT**

**If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 11:1–16***LESSON****Time is running****VERSE 9**

*Jesus answered, Are there  
not twelve hours in the day?  
If any man walk in the day,  
he stumbleth not, because  
he seeth the light of this  
world.*

This chapter recounts the history of an important miracle that Christ performed before His death—the raising of Lazarus to life, which was recorded only by John. The other three Gospels confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where He resided most.

Some of the sayings of Jesus have two meanings, one that lies on the surface—and is obviously true—and another that lies below the surface and is deeper. The obvious meaning is that we must finish the day’s work within the day, for the night comes when work is ended. If we can have one wish, it could well be that we would come to the end of each day with our work completed. The pressures of life are so often due to our trying to catch up on work that should have been done earlier. We should spend time wisely and not dissipate it on useless extravagances, however pleasant the latter may be. In this way, we will never be in debt to time.

Below the surface is the deeper meaning. John frequently uses the words “the dark” and “the night” to describe life dominated by evil, a life without Christ. When we hear the phrase “the Light of the world”, we immediately think of Jesus.

The Gospel is based on God’s love, but there is a problem. A person has only so much time to make his peace with God through Christ and if he or she does not do so, judgement will follow.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 48**  
**JOHN 11:1–16**

**THOUGHT**

**The Gospel of Christ has two sides to it: the glory of being in time and the tragedy of being too late.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 11:17–44***LESSON****Sent by the Father****VERSE 42**

*And I knew that thou  
hearest me always: but  
because of the people which  
stand by I said it, that they  
may believe that thou hast  
sent me.*

When Jesus received the news about the severe illness of Lazarus, He stayed put for another two days. After that, He proceeded towards Bethany and told His disciples that Lazarus was “asleep” [meaning dead] and that He was to wake him [v. 11–14].

The raising of Lazarus from death is a miracle to show that, as our Lord puts it, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” [v. 4].

Jesus, Who miraculously calmed the storm, could have easily ordered the stone covering the tomb of Lazarus to move away but it was moved by the crowd on His instruction [v. 39]. Just as the stone was about to be removed, Martha interrupted with a warning that they would be overwhelmed by the stench because Lazarus had been dead for four days. Our Lord did not rebuke Martha but reminded her of what she confessed a few moments ago [v. 22]. These words of Jesus [v. 40] removed Martha’s momentary doubt: “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

This miracle was performed not only to strengthen the faith of His disciples [v. 15] but also to show that Jesus was sent by God the Father, and also to bring glory to the Son of God [v. 4]. He prayed in public to show the crowd that His Father was with Him in this act and had power over death.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 49**  
**JOHN 11:17–44**

**THOUGHT**

**So much of what we do is designed for our own prestige. It may be that there would be more wonders in our life if we cease to act by ourselves and for ourselves, and set God in the central place.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 11:45–57***LESSON****Resisting the Truth****VERSE 49**

*And one of them, named  
Caiaphas, being the high  
priest that same year,  
said unto them, Ye know  
nothing at all,*

It is interesting how someone can try to say one thing but be understood to be saying something completely different. You can say something positive but it is perceived to be negative. There is a similar incident here with Caiaphas. He had no intention of giving us any comfort in his words. All he was trying to do was sugar-coat his intention for murder. Little did he know that God turned his words for the cause of the Gospel.

God is able to use even an evil mouth to remind us of His promises. Unknowingly, Caiaphas was speaking the truth, albeit out of ill will. Jesus did come as a substitute—to die for you and me. He came to reconcile us to God, to trade His Son's righteousness for our sins, and to unify us in a common faith in Christ.

On another note, Christians have become comfortable with the sin-and-forgiveness system, using our in-born sinfulness as an excuse to keep on sinning. It is much easier to take the easy path of Caiaphas—relying on your weakness and sending Christ to the Cross all over again. We have our own Caiaphas society today. People are committing the same sin.

When you know what you are doing is wrong and you seek to find a seemingly pious excuse, using Christian terms to disguise your sin, you put yourself on the same level as Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. How is your relationship with the Lord?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 50**  
**JOHN 11:45–57**

**THOUGHT**

**Unbelief in God and His Word is deliberate, and God is holding every person accountable.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 12:1–36***LESSON****Drawing nigh to God****VERSE 12**

*On the next day much  
people that were come to  
the feast, when they heard  
that Jesus was coming to  
Jerusalem,*

The palm tree is often seen as a symbol of Israel. It is not only a symbol of beauty and prosperity but also a sign of victory. “Hosanna” is a cry to God for deliverance. The Jews had wanted to make Jesus their king but He always got away from them. He knew they were still looking for a political deliverer.

This time, Jesus did not stop them, though He was still not going to do what they wanted. He was going to save them, but in a way different from the people’s expectations. Instead of wiping out the Romans, Jesus was going to wipe out the penalty of their sins.

Some of you may be going through a difficult time financially. Some of you may be at that point of your life where you are looking for that special person—someone you can marry. Some of you may be struggling with all sorts of physical difficulties, diseases and handicaps. God cares about all these things. But this is not His priority in your life. God cares first of all that you know Him. And until you do something about your sins, you will not know Him.

Jesus did come to answer the cries of the Hosannas. He came to save them from their sins. Some of you need to know God’s salvation. Some of you have friends that you are concerned about, or maybe you have lost sight of what is really important in life. Perhaps today you would want to know God again.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 51**  
**JOHN 12:1–36**

**THOUGHT**

**Jesus was on time for His appointment, but they did not recognise Him.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 12:37–50***LESSON****So many signs, so little  
faith****VERSE 37***But though he had done  
so many miracles before  
them, yet they believed not  
on him.*

**W**hat more could Jesus have done to convince these people? Why were so many still refusing to believe? What more does a person need to be convinced? Surely there are consequences when we are given truth and we wilfully brush them off.

Our unbelief in the face of clear evidence is often a result of our own desires. We crave the affection of men more than the affection of God. The fear of man's condemnation prevents our ability to rejoice in God's redemption. If we live to please people, our reputation will be our only reward. We will receive some awards and recognition from this world but they will always fall short. The opinions of men can never meet the need that our hearts desire.

Scripture says, "Now is the day of salvation." We have no guarantee that we will be given a last warning before we face the consequences for ignoring the first. Each time we wilfully ignore the invitation of our Lord, that action becomes more like the formation of a habit. Almost without knowing it, we become hardened in our hearts. Soon we won't be able to hear that still, small voice anymore.

What a terrible choice it is to push God away! What a horrible condition to be in when "will not believe" becomes "cannot believe"! So why do we resist? Why do we seek so many excuses? May God help us to have the wisdom and courage to live an undivided life to the glory of our heavenly Father.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 52  
JOHN 12:37-50**

**THOUGHT**

**Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way? –Proverbs 20:24**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 13:1–17***LESSON****Humility****VERSE 14**

*If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

Foot-washing was a necessity in Israel. The streets were dusty and people wore sandals. It was a mark of honour for a host to provide a servant to wash a guest's feet; it was a rite of hospitality among the Jews, a common and well-known service performed by servants.

However, in Christ's teaching, it is the attitude of humility and not the act of foot-washing that is important. By washing the feet of His disciples, Jesus shows that spiritual greatness does not come from pride or self-assertion but through humility and service to others.

The command to follow Jesus' example goes far beyond the activity of foot-washing. Will you still serve if you know your acts of love would probably not be reciprocated? In the midst of your declining physical health, whom are you concerned about? When you suffer physically, does your heart ache for someone else instead? Do you sense a heart of compassion that draws you into prayer? When you are in the midst of a personal trial, do you become absorbed in yourself or do you attempt to focus on someone else who is struggling as well? Will you take the time to lift these people up in prayer?

Have you allowed Jesus to wash your soul? The invitation is here, the choice is yours. Just remember what Jesus said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" [John 13:8]. We can think about serving. We can pray about serving. We can prepare for serving. But at some point we must start serving.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 53**  
**JOHN 13:1–17**

**THOUGHT**

**Humility is love in action.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 13:18–38***LESSON****Because He lives****VERSE 19**

*Now I tell you before it  
come, that, when it is come  
to pass, ye may believe that  
I am he.*

Jesus was concerned about how His disciples would react when they finally realised that Judas was the one who would betray Him. Would they be discouraged and question their own faith when they saw the betrayer was one of their own? Jesus gave them notice so that when it happened, they would not be shaken, but be strengthened instead.

When a person becomes a Christian, it is like walking out of a very dark room into a place of pure light and goodness. Keep in mind that the glory is all about Jesus, not the people who are trying to follow Him. Sometimes the people that look the nicest can hurt you the most. You will even be disappointed in some Christians. However, do not lose your faith in God when it happens.

David wrote, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up” [Psalm 27:10]. As Christians, we have really no reason to be alarmed regarding things that can happen to us. God is our Protector. He upholds us in all our trials. He conducts us through the valley of death and finally brings us to heaven.

Christ’s amazing grace in the face of Judas’ own unbelief and hardness of heart should compel us to be certain that we have believed in Christ as Saviour. It should also motivate us to love and forgive those who reject Him. How far will you go in expressing love and forgiveness for others?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 54**  
**JOHN 13:18-38**

**THOUGHT**

**If no one else appreciates you, God does. If no one seems to understand, God does.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 14***LESSON****Knowing peace****VERSE 27**

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

The world's concept of peace is the absence of tensions and conflicts. Its view of peace is the total void of all outward problems. However, world peace is a wild goose chase, for it ignores the One Who is the Prince of Peace. The world is working for peace without looking for the only Person Who can give it. There is no peace until we find peace with God.

“Shalom” or “peace unto you” is a greeting that means, “I hope you have all the highest good coming your way.” But the peace of Jesus is not only hope. It is an actual gift. The peace that Jesus leaves with His people exists even in conflict, in the midst of distresses and turmoil, heartaches and pressures.

There is no reason for us, as Christians, to fear isolation, destruction or permanent loss because even in moments of troubles and storms, Jesus gives us His peace—His “shalom”. Peace is our inheritance. Peace is what Jesus has left us. It is fundamental and cannot be taken away from us.

Life's challenges and demands pull at us from all sides. Many are facing decisions about their future. Many are vexed by financial obligations. Some are stressed with school. We carry troubled hearts over matters such as unsaved loved ones or physical ailments. But God is able to give you His peace today as you release your burdens, rely on Him and remember His faithfulness. Do you know God's peace in your life so that others can see?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 55**  
**JOHN 14**

**THOUGHT**

**No God, no peace ... Know God, know peace.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 15***LESSON****The vine and the fruit****VERSE 4**

*Abide in me, and I in you.  
As the branch cannot bear  
fruit of itself, except it abide  
in the vine; no more can ye,  
except ye abide in me.*

Jesus identified Himself as the True Vine. In today's parable, God the Father is the Gardener and believers are branches of the vine. As there are two kinds of branches (fruitless branches and fruitful ones), there are also two kinds of believers (fruitless Christians and fruitful ones).

The Father not only prunes away unproductive branches that sap the life of the vine but He also trims the productive branches so they can be more fruitful. To be as fruitful as possible, genuine believers have to face the pain of being trimmed and cleaned, tried and tested, refined and transformed.

God wants us to produce fruit that is Christ-like—the fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22–23]. To bear such fruit, believers must remain in Jesus. If we do so, Jesus has promised He will remain in us. We need to talk to God but we also need to be sensitive and hearkening when He speaks to us. We need to read His Word but we also need to wait for His presence. We need to serve God but we also need to expect God to work.

Jesus commands believers to love so that others may know that we are Christians by our acts of love. Believers will face hostilities such as persecution, rejection and ridicule from the world. But God wants us to use such situations to mould ourselves into more gracious, loving, patient and victorious Christians. He wants us to bear the fruit of the Spirit that glorifies God and brings people into His Kingdom.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 56**  
**JOHN 15**

**THOUGHT**

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. – Galatians 5:22–23**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 16:1–15***LESSON****Trials and the Holy Spirit****VERSE 13**

*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

While in the Upper Room, Jesus told His disciples that He was going to leave them. He told them that the world would hate and persecute them, just as it had hated Him. In our text for today, Jesus warned that they would be thrown out of the synagogue, and that people would kill them, thinking that they were doing God a favour.

But Jesus promised that they would not be alone as they passed through those rough times. Even though Jesus was going away, He and the Father would send the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire them. Jesus would continue to be with them and speak to them, through the Holy Spirit.

There are times in our lives (and there always will be) when we face personal adversities. Death and disease, divorce and disaster assail us, sometimes coming in rapid succession into our lives. But the promise that Jesus made in the Upper Room to His disciples is the same promise that He makes to all of us. The Advocate—the Holy Spirit—Who was sent to the disciples is sent to us as well. God abides within each one of us.

Today, we have more churches than ever before, yet society is also disintegrating faster than ever before. What impact do Christians have on society? Jesus declares that the strategy for the Church begins with people who have been inwardly transformed. Have you been transformed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 57**  
**JOHN 16:1–15**

**THOUGHT**

**The Holy Spirit will perform His transforming work in the lives of Christians and convince and convict an unbelieving world of sin, righteousness and judgement.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 16:16–33***LESSON****Sorrow to joy****VERSE 20**

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

This passage brings to an end Jesus' discussions with His disciples in the Upper Room. Jesus told His disciples again that "in a little while" they would see Him no more [v. 16]. Yet, "after a little while," they would see Him. Jesus was preparing them for His death and His resurrection.

Jesus knew that His disciples could not understand His words. But He also knew that in a few days, they would experience the most profound grief when they would see the horror of the Cross and fled from it. But soon their grief would be transformed into glorious joy when they saw the empty tomb and His resurrection. The departure of Jesus intensified the disciples' relationship with the Father, such that they would be able to directly ask the Father in His name and receive answers to their prayers with great joy [v. 24].

This blessed relationship with the Father can be ours, too. And so is our calling to be fellow workers with Jesus and ask for things in Jesus' name—things that promote the glory of God and further His purpose in and for the world. What a great privilege it is to be co-labourers with Christ!

The death and resurrection of Jesus is of vital importance to our lives as Christians. It gives us the certain hope of a new creation. It vindicates Jesus as the Messiah and assures us of our status in Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 58**  
**JOHN 16:16–33**

**THOUGHT**

**By the Cross and His resurrection, Jesus has conquered the world in its violent defiance and stubborn resistance to God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 17***LESSON****The longest prayer of  
Jesus****VERSE 21**

*That they all may be one;  
as thou, Father, art in me,  
and I in thee, that they  
also may be one in us: that  
the world may believe that  
thou hast sent me.*

The longest recorded prayer of Jesus is recorded here. In this prayer, we can discern the inner thoughts of His mind and learn much of His relationship with His Father. This prayer can be divided into three main themes.

First, Jesus prayed that He might be glorified by means of the Cross. Through His death and resurrection, He would bring glory to the Father. When Jesus was crucified on the Cross, the hidden riches and radiance of God's love was made visible to the world. The Cross gives Jesus the authority to bestow eternal life on all whom the Father brings to Him. He is the source of life to all who come to Him.

Second, Jesus prayed for His 11 disciples. He knew they would face the hostility of the world and the schemes of Satan. Having great love and concern for His disciples, He prayed that they would be kept and preserved by the power and authority of God the Father; that they would remain unified and faithful after He had left. He prayed that they would manifest His character and be sanctified as instruments of God's will.

Finally, Jesus prayed for all believers, including you and me, that we might be one, unified in Christ. Love is the hallmark of the true Church. When we love one another, that love produces the unity that God desires and is the wellspring of our witness to those around us. Do you know Jesus and do you manifest His character of love?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 59**  
**JOHN 17**

**THOUGHT**

**The way to ensure our protection from the hostility of the world is to maintain a close relationship with Jesus.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 18:1–27***LESSON****Jesus is in control****VERSE 8**

*Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:*

Jesus was in secret prayer when Judas arrived with a group of soldiers and officials carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. He asked the armed crowd, “Who is it you want?” When they answered, “Jesus of Nazareth,” Jesus simply replied, “I am He.” The soldiers were so awestruck by Jesus’ statement that they fell to the ground.

They had not expected Jesus to boldly step forward and hand Himself over to them. Jesus even told them to let His disciples go, as He was concerned for their safety. Jesus showed that He was in complete control. He gave orders and the soldiers obeyed.

Jesus also rebuked Peter when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant. Here is a man who risked his life, drawing his sword in front of a group of Roman soldiers and mutilated one of their companions. Yet when pointed out by an innocent servant girl later in the crowd [v. 17], he would deny being a disciple of Jesus. His former zealous spirit and courage would wilt and he would lie. One lie would lead to another and he would end up denying Jesus three times, as Jesus had prophesied.

We too must confess that there are times when we err in our misguided attempts to serve the Lord. It may be a sharp word to someone or an argument with a friend with whom we try to debate rather than love. We ought to “put away the sword” [v. 11] and not attempt to defend our Lord with worldly methods.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 60  
JOHN 18:1–27**

**PRAYER**

**O Father, I thank Thee for Thy unspeakable gift, for while I was yet a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, Christ my Saviour died for me.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 18:28–40***LESSON****What is truth?****VERSE 37**

*Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

The Jews wanted Jesus to be put to death but they did not have the right to pronounce the death sentence on crimes adjudicated by the Jewish courts. Instead, they had to go before the Roman governor, who at that time was Pontius Pilate.

The Jewish leaders told Pilate that Jesus' crime was his claim to be king of the Jews and the Son of God. The first part of the accusation meant He broke Roman law and the second part meant He broke Jewish law. They asserted that either claim carried the death sentence.

Because of the Jewish leaders' insistence that Jesus must die, Pilate was forced to question Jesus by asking, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus responded by giving his own definition of kingship. He declared that He was not the kind of king that was known to or understood by the world. He is the King born for the purpose of unveiling the truth, of making people face reality as it truly is. So every person who loves the truth listens to Him and understands Him to be their true king.

What is truth? Truth is closely related to God Himself. Jesus came "full of grace and truth." Knowing the truth is not enough; we must also be living the truth. Those who claim to have fellowship with Jesus but continue to walk in darkness "do not live by the truth" [1 John 1:6]. Are you living in the truth?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 61**  
**JOHN 18:28–40**

**THOUGHT**

**Knowing and living the truth are one and the same. The Spirit reveals the truth and defends Christ's followers by testifying to the truth.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 19:1–15***LESSON****The fifth question****VERSE 9**

*And went again into the judgement hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.*

Pilate, the Roman procurator, asked Jesus a series of questions [John 18:33, 35, 37–38]. The fifth question was “Whence art thou?”

The first four questions betrayed the contempt and disdain that Pilate had for Jesus. However, the fifth question was preceded by a description of fear. Pilate was afraid [v. 8]. Perhaps he was afraid of the Jewish mob, though certainly not afraid that he could not save Jesus’ life. The reason for Pilate’s fear must be seen in the light of the fifth question. He could have remembered what his wife had told him: “Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him” [Matthew 27:19].

As a Roman governor, Pilate had seen countless criminals—guilty as well as innocent ones. But he had never met someone like Jesus. Pilate did not ask Jesus, “Who art Thou?” Instead he asked, “Whence art thou?” or “Where did you come from?” Pilate already knew that Jesus was from Galilee [Luke 23:6], and thus his question suggested that he suspected Jesus to be not just another man.

“Where did you come from really?” Could Jesus be more than man? Pilate was hoping for an answer. But unlike previous times, our Lord kept silent [v. 9]. This deliberate silence on the part of our Lord was a judicial act. Pilate had forfeited his right to further revelation. Like Pilate, the door of grace may have been shut for some because their hearts are hardened and minds reprobate.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 62**  
**JOHN 19:1–15**

**THOUGHT**

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” [Isaiah 55:6]. Who knows when the day will be when Christ Jesus will give no answer?

**BIBLE LESSON***John 19:16–42***LESSON****Jesus of Nazareth, the  
King of the Jews****VERSE 19***And Pilate wrote a title,  
and put it on the cross. And  
the writing was, JESUS OF  
NAZARETH THE KING  
OF THE JEWS.*

**A** pre-dawn arrest, an early morning interrogation and trial under the cover of darkness. By the third hour [Mark 15:25]—nine in the morning—our Lord Jesus was crucified. The light of the world at that point in time seemed to have been snuffed out by the darkness of wicked men.

Pontius Pilate wrote a “title”, which was really a description of the crime our Lord Jesus had been accused of and “found guilty”. The charge: JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. The Jews protested [v. 21] but Pilate refused to amend the charge because it was they who had falsely laid this capital crime of sedition on Jesus [Luke 23:2].

This title was Pilate’s cruel joke and final act of contempt for Jesus. The Romans had proclaimed the kingship of Jesus and then put the king to death—the plait of thorns was His crown, the cross was His throne and the crucifixion was His coronation. However, from the pen of Pilate came the truth—Jesus is indeed the King of the Jews and the Saviour of the world.

The title was made known to the whole Roman Empire in three languages: Hebrew, the language of the Jews; Greek, the language of the intellect; and Latin, the language of law and the Romans. Everyone could now read the title in his own language, unwittingly giving Jesus a universal appeal. As John later writes, “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” [1 John 4:14].

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 63  
JOHN 19:16–42**

**THOUGHT**

**Where there is neither Greek nor Jew,  
circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian,  
Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in  
all. – Colossians 3:11**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 20:1–18***LESSON****Seeing an empty tomb****VERSE 8**

*Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.*

**I**t was the ninth hour (three in the afternoon) when our Lord Jesus died [Luke 23:44–46]. His body was taken down from the Cross, hurriedly embalmed and entombed because the Sabbath was nigh. As soon as daylight broke after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre but saw that the stone had been rolled away. Her first thought: someone had taken the body of Jesus.

When she told John and Peter, both disciples ran to the tomb. John reached the tomb first. He stood at the entrance of the tomb and “saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in” [v. 5]. Peter was more impulsive. He ran into the tomb and “seeth the linen clothes lie” [v. 6]. Then John also went inside and “he saw, and believed” [v. 8].

There are three Greek words used for the act of seeing. John “saw” [v. 5] in that he took a glance and was aware of the linen clothes. Peter “seeth” [v. 6] meant that he examined the linen clothes. John later went inside and he “saw” [v. 8], meaning that he perceived with understanding. John “saw, and believed” [v. 8], that is, he believed Mary’s report that the body of Jesus was missing, not that Jesus had resurrected.

Both Peter and John examined the evidence and missed the truth. That is the contrast between faith and science. By investigating the linen clothes, they understood that the body was missing. They were unable to see the significance of the empty tomb. There has never been so much truth in emptiness, which only spiritual eyes can behold.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
ISAIAH 64  
JOHN 20:1–18**

**THOUGHT**

**I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. – Psalm 27:13–14**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 20:19–31***LESSON****Written for belief****VERSE 31**

*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Here is the reason for recording the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ: “These are written that ye might believe.” The written record is certainly more accurate and reliable than the oral tradition.

John’s gospel has a twofold objective. First, it is to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ and the Son of God, through the miracles He performed and His discourses. John points out that not every miracle is recorded, disproving any claims of embellishment. The Gospel record is not like “cunningly devised fables” [2 Peter 1:16]. It is the Apostles’ eyewitness accounts of the glory and majesty of Christ. The grand conclusion at the end of a three-year discipleship is that Jesus, the son of Mary and a carpenter, is the Christ, the Son of God. This is more than just a title. It speaks of the divine nature of our Lord.

Second, this gospel record is for everyone to look at the evidence so that they might be convinced and come to believe. The object of faith is Christ. The outcome of faith is life through His Name. Christ is the life [John 1:4; 14:6]. However, it is not our act of believing that we can claim everlasting life and all its benefits. Life comes to us through the righteousness of Christ, and faith is the way in which we may know and experience it.

“These are written”—the presumption is that these would be read to believe. Though we are two thousand years removed from these events, the principle of faith holds true. Faith comes by knowing the Word of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ISAIAH 65**  
**JOHN 20:19–31**

**THOUGHT**

**Some books are read for knowledge; others for enjoyment; but the Bible is read that we might know life-giving truth.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 21***LESSON****Feed My sheep****VERSE 15**

*So when they had dined,  
Jesus saith to Simon Peter,  
Simon, son of Jonas, lovest  
thou me more than these?  
He saith unto him, Yea,  
Lord; thou knowest that  
I love thee. He saith unto  
him, Feed my lambs.*

John's gospel ends with a tender encounter between Peter and our Lord Jesus. Peter had denied our Lord Jesus three times and was ashamed of it. Together with the other apostles, they had returned to their former trade—fishing.

Such is the grace of our Lord that He came to Peter even though Peter had deserted Him. Jesus asked, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" This question was repeated three times. It served to remind Peter of his presumptuous superiority that he had claimed for himself above the others. It served not to test Peter's faith in Christ but his love for Him. Love is the evidence of faith.

Peter gave the same reply to all three questions, with increased emotion each time. It was only when Peter had affirmed his love for Christ that our Lord assigned the work to Peter. For Peter, the evidence of his love for Christ would be seen in his faithfulness to this work: feed My sheep. This Peter remembered well. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" [1 Peter 5:2].

The work of shepherding is to care, protect and provide. To shepherd, the love for Christ is required. It is a love of the highest order, a love that is personal and a love that calls for sacrifice. It is a work that demands more than a person can give. Save for the grace and the constraining love of God, it is humanly impossible.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ISAIAH 66**  
**JOHN 21**

**THOUGHT**

Our Lord Jesus asks, "[Your name], lovest thou me more than these?" And your reply would be:

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