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DAILY
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OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2016

GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

Daily devotions for reading through the Bible

Dear Daily Manna readers,

Over the last two years, we have been tracing the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the journey of His ministry. With this issue of Daily Manna, we have come to the end of our Lord Jesus' earthly life and ministry.

Over the next three months, we will meditate on the suffering, crucifixion, death of our blessed Saviour. But Christianity is not about the death of Jesus. It does Calvary! Christianity begins from Calvary; from His rising from the grave, His resurrection, His victory over the grave; and ours as well because our Lord Jesus promises, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

As the year comes to an end, our Lord's victory over sin and death should also spur us on to greater love for Him, greater hunger for His Word, and greater fervour for His work. I pray that in the new year, you will continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria.

A note to new Daily Manna readers

In this book, you'll 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.

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've 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

1 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 26:36

LESSON
Fellowship at
the Mount of Olives

VERSE 36

*Then cometh Jesus with them
unto a place called
Gethsemane, and saith unto
the disciples, Sit ye here,
while I go and pray yonder.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 36
PSALM 61

Following the Lord's Supper, Jesus led His disciples across the Kidron Valley to Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. "Gethsemane" meaning "oil press", a garden of olive trees where the Lord spent His final hours in prayer fellowship alone with the Father and with His disciples before His suffering and death. In spite of what Jesus was about to go through for our sins, His concern was to prepare His disciples for what was to follow. He knew that they would be scattered from Him. What they needed most was a closer fellowship with Him in prayer.

Christian fellowship goes beyond feasting. It is coming together to fellowship around God's Word, draw near to Christ in worship, in prayer and encourage one another to press on in faith.

Jesus told His disciples, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation" [Luke 22:40]. In prayer, the Lord grants us strength to overcome temptations. But the disciples failed to pray and they were scattered when the Lord was taken away. Nevertheless the Lord's command for prayer fellowship was not in vain. It helped them to realize their weaknesses and learn lessons of faith when they continue to meet with the Lord after He rose from the dead.

Today though we often draw near to God individually, we also do so privately with our families and corporately in our churches to worship Him, fellowship and uphold one another in prayers. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Do go for prayer meeting. Believers that pray together stay together, come what may.

THOUGHT

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; ... Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep – Romans 12:12,15

2 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 26:37-38

LESSON

A heavy soul

VERSE 38

*Then said He unto them,
My soul is exceeding sorrowful,
even unto death: tarry ye here,
and watch with Me.*

No mortal is able to comprehend what Jesus went through when He offered Himself to die for our sins. In the Garden of Gethsemane He felt the full weight of the sins of the whole world laid upon Him as He faced His death by crucifixion. “Sorrowful and very heavy” [v.s 37] describes His agonizing pain and suffering. Jesus was consumed with intense heaviness of soul and sorrow of heart for many reasons.

For one, He was to taste death physically for undeserving sinners like us even though He Himself is sinless. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a). But His sinless nature did not deserve to die. No wonder He says to them, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”.

For another, He suffered mentally and emotionally because He knew His rejection by the unbelieving Jews, the betrayal by Judas Iscariot, the denial by Peter, the unjust treatment in His trial followed by mocking, scourging, the torturing crown of thorns and the nailing to the cross.

Yet the most terrifying weight upon Him is the mystery that He was to suffer separation from God the Father because of our sins. It corresponded with His cry upon the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” [Matthew 27:46b]. It was for our sake that Jesus bore these heavy burdens that we through Him might have peace with God and find rest in Him.

Jesus knows your heavy burdens and your every need today not only because He is omniscient, but also because He has gone through heavier sorrows than anyone of us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 37
PSALM 62

THOUGHT

For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. – 2 Corinthians 5:21

3 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 14:35-36

LESSON

Let this cup
pass from Me

VERSE 36

*And He said, Abba, Father,
all things are possible unto
Thee; take away this cup from
Me: nevertheless not what I
will, but what Thou wilt.*

As the Lord Jesus contemplated on the infinite task of His death bearing the weight of the sins of the world, He fell on His face before His Father in prayer. Like a child calling upon his father in total dependence, Jesus cried out “Abba Father” for the help of His Heavenly Father.

For three times, Jesus prayed the same prayer. “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” This cup speaks of the cross – our Lord’s suffering, death and separation from God. In this prayer, we see both His divine and human nature at work.

In His sinless human nature Jesus struggled with the reality of bearing the sins of the world (including our sins). He wrestled with the Father if it be possible for Him to avoid the cross. On the other hand, “nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” revealed His divine nature being one with the Father. Here Jesus accepted God’s will to be the Sacrificial Lamb for our sins for there is no other way to save us. Jesus willingly took our sins upon Himself, suffered, shed His precious blood and died to reconcile us to God.

Saved by grace does not mean that we are perfect. In our weaknesses we still struggle to live for Christ. When we suffer for truth and righteousness, we do at times complain. The only way to enjoy victory over this is to look to God and adopt the humble attitude of Christ in accepting the Father’s will.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 38
PSALM 63

THOUGHT

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

4 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 14:37-38

LESSON

Watch and pray

VERSE 38

*Watch ye and pray,
lest ye enter into temptation.
The spirit truly is ready,
but the flesh is weak.*

One lesson Jesus taught His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane was to “watch and pray” and to have victory over temptation. Rising from prayer, He went to His three disciples who were supposed to be praying with Him but had instead fallen asleep. Jesus warned them they must not fail to pray for themselves to remain steadfast when He was taken away from them.

Why did they fail to pray? Physically they were tired; emotionally they were drained due to “sorrow” or sadness [Luke 22:45]. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Most of all, the importance of prayer and spiritual dependency upon God in facing trials had not been learnt yet. They probably saw little value in prayer since they believed Jesus to be their Messiah and nothing could prevent Him. But be as it may, there was no excuse for failing to obey the Lord to watch and pray. The result – they fled and forsook the Lord.

All of us experience struggles with temptations – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The only way to enjoy victory over the weaknesses of our flesh and over the powers of darkness trying to frustrate us in doing the will of God is to watch and pray.

When we seek the Lord’s help and put our trust in Him, we find strength in times of need. And where we fail, we do not give up. Get right with God for “... we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” [1 John 2:1b].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 39
PSALM 64

THOUGHT

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.
– Ephesians 6:18

5 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 22:41-42

LESSON

Thy will be done

VERSE 42

*Saying, Father,
if Thou be willing,
remove this cup from Me:
nevertheless not My will,
but Thine, be done.*

Jesus knew no sin for He is sinless and perfect. Yet in His human nature Jesus became sin for us. The intensity of His same prayer three times to the Father that if it was in any way possible for Him to be spared from being our Sin-bearer underlined His great struggle against the terror of sin. It was so unbearable that an angel from heaven came to strengthen Him.

His righteous struggle against becoming sin for us ended only when Jesus accepted the will of the Father to make atonement for our sins. "Not My will but Thy will be done". With victory at hand, Jesus was ready to face the cross and die in our place for all our sins.

We will never be able to comprehend such wondrous love for us wretched and undeserving sinners. But one thing we learn from our Lord in His struggle against sin is that He has paid a great price with His own shed blood to save us from eternal hell judgement.

We thank God that He saved us to do His will. It means that we must continue to strive against sin at all cost. We do this not in our own strength but with the help of God through the Holy Spirit. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" [Galatians 5:24]. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" [Galatians 5:17].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 40
PSALM 65

PRAYER

O LORD, in obedience to Your Word, help us to walk in the Spirit, so that we will not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

6 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 22:43-44

LESSON Great drops of blood

VERSE 44

*And being in an agony
He prayed more earnestly:
and His sweat was as it were
great drops of blood
falling down to the ground.*

To Gethsemane came our Lord to prepare for His final trial. And His preparation was prayer. Soon the sinless head would bear the weight and blackness of humanity's sin. So revolutive would be the taint on divine purity that the Holy God would turn His face away from His beloved Son. Here prayed Jesus, compelled to obey His Father's will, yet torn asunder by the sorrow of what He knew lay ahead at Calvary.

So He prayed, with an intensity to the point of sweating blood. "Hematidrosis" – a rare human condition in which extreme anguish causes one's blood vessels to rupture and effuse into the sweat glands. Even in this was the humanity of Christ displayed.

Our Lord certainly knows our weaknesses and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities". Not only has He been tested in all ways as we are, but infinitely more as we see in the garden today. Christ Divine, in frailness of flesh, feeling such anguish that His only resort was in prayer.

Therein lies the answer to all of life's challenges and trials. We will never feel agony like that of Gethsemane, and we may never pray as the Lord did to the point of blood, but pray we must. And it is in serious and intense prayer, the prayer of faith in God and in submission to His will, that we will find His receptive ear and His helping hand. Perchance, an angel from heaven will appear to strengthen us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 41
PSALM 66

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, as men ought always to pray and not faint, help us to pray with perseverance and patience, trusting in Your perfect will and promises to us. Amen.

7 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 14:39-42

LESSON

The hour is at hand

VERSE 41

And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

While Jesus was engaged in agonising prayer, His closest disciples had fallen asleep from sorrowful exhaustion [Luke 22:45]. Now as He rejoined them the final time and found them still asleep, note our Lord's gentleness as He says most tenderly to them, "Sleep on now, take your rest."

The Lord knew their frailty and He knows ours, for often our spirit is willing, but our flesh is weak. We are the bruised reed that He will not break, and the smoking flax that He will not extinguish. He is like a father who pities his children, for He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust and He will never allow us to be tested beyond what we are able to endure.

The Lord also knows the future. The hour of His betrayal had arrived. Nothing would catch Omniscience by surprise for He knew all things. Our times are also in God's hands. Every happening and event in our lives is ordained by the Lord of time – past, present and future. We are not creatures of chance and coincidence. From birth to death, God knows us and keeps us as the apple of His eye. He shelters us under the shadow of His wings.

This is the blessedness and security of the child of God. It behoves us therefore to make our election and calling sure, to trust in Christ alone and accept Him as Saviour and Lord of our lives. So shall we be safe forevermore.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 42
PSALM 67

THOUGHT

My times are in Thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! – Psalm 31:15, 19

8 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 18:2-3

LESSON

The arrest of Jesus

VERSE 3

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

The enemies of the Lord were a multitude. Those who came to arrest Him comprised a Roman cohort of soldiers (numbering 300 to 600 men), Jewish temple police and armed men sent from the chief priests, scribes and leaders of the people and Judas Iscariot, one of the Lord's twelve.

We may note first that the enemies of the Lord are numerous. They had heard Him teach with authority and witnessed His many miracles, yet they came as an armed mob to arrest Him. Even today, the forces aligned against the Lord of heaven and earth are plentiful in number. Multitudes in the world who have heard the Word and seen the evidence, still spurn and reject Christ.

We note second that the enemies of the Lord are powerful, even men of learning and authority, among whom were chief priests, Pharisees and leaders of the people. So it is in our time; we should not be surprised that men of intellect, influence and substance will thumb their noses and hold in derision the revealed Saviour of mankind.

Finally we may note that the enemy of the Lord also came from within His closest followers. We should therefore not be surprised that even in the professing church today will be numbered His enemies, counterfeit professors, false teachers and prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing who will deceive the unwary.

Let us however not be discouraged, but rather be warned, be vigilant and be true. Our Lord knows those who are His.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 43
PSALM 68

PRAYER

Lord, help me be faithful and true to You, to guard against thinking, saying or doing anything that will betray You and bring dishonour to Your Holy name. Amen.

9 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 22:47-48

LESSON

The kiss of betrayal

VERSE 48

*But Jesus said unto him, Judas,
betrayest thou the Son of man
with a kiss?*

They came for Him in dark Gethsemane that night. Among their number, Judas Iscariot the betrayer, one who in God's inscrutable plan and sovereign will had been granted admission into the intimacy of Christ's inner circle. For silver, he would mark his master with the kiss of infamy. But the Lord knew from the beginning who should betray Him [John 6:64] and allowed it to be so in order that Scripture might be fulfilled. We are told that Satan entered into Judas and took control of his heart.

True it is that upon Judas' head rests the infamy of his heinous act for all eternity. But it is our own hearts that we must be careful for. We may not have done as Judas did, but have we betrayed our Lord nonetheless? Have we betrayed Him by our failure to defend His name, keep his Word or walk in His path?

We may not have traded Him for silver or gold, but have we cast Him aside for man's approval and the recognition of the world? Have we taken His name in vain and His grace for granted because it was expedient for us and advantageous? Have we denied Him for fear of man, for fear of our lives or for fear of our loss? Has any idol removed the Lord and replaced Him on the throne of our hearts?

Beware, lest Satan catches us unawares and plants the seed of betrayal in us. Guard our hearts with all diligence always.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 44
PSALM 69

THOUGHT

The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born. – Matthew 26:24

10 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 18:4-9

LESSON

Christ facing the mob

VERSE 6

*As soon then as He had said
unto them, I am He,
they went backward,
and fell to the ground.*

Our Lord and His disciples thus faced an armed crowd that had come to arrest Him. And as Jesus identified Himself, declaring that He was the great “I AM”, a manifestation of power emanating from such divine utterance knocked this determined mob to the ground. There was nothing they could have done that Christ did not allow. And Christ did not allow that any of His disciples should be taken, that it might be fulfilled of which He had spoken, “Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none” [John 18:9].

Even in apparent defeat, as evil events against the Lord came to a head, His disciples are not forsaken but instead granted safe passage and given encouragement through a sublime demonstration of the universal authority and power of God the Son.

For us too, even as we are reminded today who Christ is. He is the Great Shepherd, who knows His sheep and keeps them. He is God, who holds us in His eternal hands, ever so secure no one can pluck us out. He is the Lord who speaks and evil capitulates. He knows all things “for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” This is our Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who claims us as His very own.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 45
PSALM 70

THOUGHT

If there was so much majesty in the voice of Christ in one of the lowest acts of His humiliation, what will the voice of a glorified Christ be to sinners, when He shall come as a judge to condemn the world. – William Burkitt.

11 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 26:51-53

LESSON

Peter severs
the ear of Malchus

VERSE 52

*Then said Jesus unto him,
Put up again thy sword into
his place: for all they that take
the sword shall perish
with the sword.*

We so often perceive ourselves as smarter than God, forgetting that the source of our intelligence is Him. We even want God to do things our way. “If I were God, I would have done it this way.” Remember that God knows everything from the beginning to the end. We only have very limited knowledge; we do not even know if we could still be around on this earth in the next hour. God’s ways and thoughts are much higher than those of ours.

Jesus was very clear of the purpose for His coming to earth. He came to die on our behalf. Thus His arrest, His appearance before Pilate and eventually His crucifixion were planned and known to Him from the very beginning. It was His choice to die for us.

Peter, just like us, was very upset when Jesus was arrested as he saw no justification for this. He responded instinctively; he wanted to solve things in man’s way. In an attempt to stop the people from taking Jesus away, he cut off the ear of Malchus, one of the high priest’s servants [John 18:10]. Jesus did not need this type of help from Peter as He could have summoned the whole army from heaven or He could have simply killed these people with just a word – had He wanted to.

Jesus came in peace and with only one intention. Man is never able to go to heaven no matter what he does. God has the only way and that is redemption through Jesus.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 46
PSALM 71

THOUGHT

Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy name. – Psalm 86:11

12 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 14:48-52

LESSON
Scriptures
must be fulfilled

VERSE 49

*I was daily with you
in the temple teaching,
and ye took Me not:
but the scriptures
must be fulfilled.*

Jesus taught in the temple daily yet the people did not take Him seriously. God said He would redeem and reconcile man to Him. Those who believe in the Redeemer will have a place in Heaven. Jesus is the Redeemer and He is to fulfil the Word of God as given to us. Every word has to be fulfilled to the most exact detail as it is written in the scriptures.

Each word of the Bible is inspired by God. In the Word of God, we read of many prophecies – predictions that tell us about what would happen in the future. Hundreds of these prophecies have been fulfilled. As sure as the sun rises from the east, the remaining prophecies will also surely be fulfilled. Jesus will come again. At that time, those who are still alive will ascend to meet Jesus in the clouds. There will be judgement with the second coming of Christ. This earth will eventually be destroyed and God will create a New Jerusalem. Those who die with Christ in their hearts, will go to heaven as promised; hell is the destination for those who do not believe.

Knowing that every word of God will be fulfilled, we should thus be greatly encouraged to tell the good news to as many people as we possibly can. This would spur us on to witness for Him and to work for His glory, because we indeed are proclaiming the Truth – the eternal Truth of our just and loving God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 47
PSALM 72

THOUGHT

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away. – Mark 13:31

13 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 18:12-14

LESSON

Interrogation by
Annas and Caiaphas

VERSE 13

*And led Him away to Annas
first; for he was father in law to
Caiaphas, which was the high
priest that same year.*

It was indeed difficult for Jesus' first followers to accept the fact that Christ, Whom they considered and recognised as God, was questioned by the high priest, a fellow Jew. The high priest would have read the scriptures but alas he had not recognised Jesus as the Saviour.

In fact, though a spiritual leader, the high priest had expected the Saviour to come as a powerful king; that He would be physically powerful to subdue the Romans who were then ruling over Israel. He did not believe that Jesus would be so meek. Did God not drown the Egyptian army in the Red Sea [Exodus 15:4]? Had God not killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers without the Israelites having to lift a finger [Isaiah 37:36]?

The salvation plan was different from what man then would think. Jesus the sinless had to die for sinful men. Jesus did not come to fight a physical war but a spiritual one. To save us spiritually, He had to die physically. To die for us, He had to take on human flesh.

Like the trials which Christ had to go through when He was on this earth, Jesus' followers today continue to face all sorts of sufferings. Many Christians have been put to death simply because of their faith in Jesus. Some of these persecutions might make us angry; the persecutors might even think that they have the victory. Far from it! Death to a Christian is but a transition; in a twinkling of an eye his soul is in heaven. God is just.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EZEKIEL 48
PSALM 73

THOUGHT

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. – Psalm 37:9

14 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 26:58-60

LESSON

False witnesses

VERSE 60

But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses.

All that Jesus has spoken is the Truth. It is therefore not possible to find a witness to testify against Him. On the other hand, man is wicked and will always seek to glorify himself; he will strive hard to prove his own judgements and assumptions correct, though it may mean having to lie in order to achieve this.

The high priest and all those in power wanted to put Jesus to death by any means. These priests, Sadducees and Pharisees felt that their power base would be threatened by Christ; if they could get rid of Jesus they need not submit to anyone else and they could preach whatever that they wanted.

At least two witnesses would be needed so that an accused could be charged. In desperation to build a case, the high priest found two false witnesses. In many corrupt places the words of the false witness will be taken as the truth because of abuse by those in power and influence. This is the defect of man's laws.

Our words can be sharp and can cause hurt. Be careful of what you say. "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" [James 3:5]. We should be truthful even if the truth may hurt. A false witness is a liar. There is no place in the spiritual world for liars. Pray that God will keep us faithful and truthful. Use our tongues for the glory of God. Do not be a false witness.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL I
PSALM 74

THOUGHT

But I (Jesus) say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. – Matthew 12:36

15 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 14:57-58

LESSON

False charge

VERSE 57

*And there arose certain,
and bare false witness
against Him, saying,*

Making use of the words from the two false witnesses who could not even agree with what each other had said, the high priest went ahead with a charge that was obviously fabricated out of falsehood. This charge was eventually turned over to the Roman rulers who in their true human judgement honestly had to declare that they could find no fault in Jesus.

“When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him (Jesus), they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him” [John 19:6]. Pontius Pilate was the governor at that time and had to be impartial. As he found no fault with Jesus (who is God and thus cannot sin), Pilate asked that Jesus be freed.

Even the people whom God chose and love turned against the very Saviour who came to redeem them. This is outright ingratitude and betrayal of trust. It is likened to the dog which bites the hand that feeds it. How grieved would God be when we profess to be Christians yet do all sorts of things that are offensive to God! Many of us are no better than the high priest and the group of Jews who brought false charges against Jesus. For selfish reasons, some Christians sell out their souls and the faith. Some dilute the gospel to compromise for popularity and prosperity.

Pray that we remain faithful and obedient to His word and commandments.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 2
PSALM 75

THOUGHT

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth – Psalm 37:9.

16 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 18:19-24

LESSON

Ananias' interrogation

VERSE 20

Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Ananias' midnight interrogation was hurried and insincere, intended to trip Jesus into incriminating Himself and the disciples. It was designed to achieve a predetermined conclusion and sentence – death. Ananias and his cohort were acting as tools of the “prince of this world” – ever so ready to trap and accuse the righteous.

When Ananias questioned His “doctrine”, Jesus told him to ask those officers who were present and were previously sent by the religious leaders to arrest Jesus. They had earlier found no grounds to arrest Him because they discovered “Never man spoke like this man (Jesus)” [John 7:45-53]. Jesus' answer was a condemnation to His accusers. Throughout the interrogation, Jesus maintained a divine composure of peace and dignity, awaiting the day when these evil men would appear before Him, the only righteous and just Judge, at the Great White Throne.

The evil motivation and unjust manner in which the trial was conducted, including such a violent act by a court officer, revealed how low the Jewish judicial courts had descended to. It also showed the miserable fallen state of the nation of Israel. All this happened because of the band of corrupt, greedy and power-hungry leaders who themselves turned the house of God into “a den of thieves”.

May God continue to empower our church leaders to lead us in the reverential fear of our Lord, so that we may be “the light of the world” and “salt of the earth”, giving testimony to His love and grace, justice and mercy.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 3
PSALM 76

THOUGHT

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. – 1 Timothy 2:1-2

17 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 14:60-62

LESSON

Art Thou the Christ?

VERSE 61

*But He held His peace,
and answered nothing.
Again the high priest asked
Him, and said unto Him,
Art Thou the Christ,
the Son of the Blessed?*

Before Caiaphas, Jesus kept a dignified silence [Psalm 38:12-14; Isaiah 53:7] against the spurious allegations of false witnesses, for Jesus knew that His enemies had predetermined that He should die.

Jesus taught us that at times silence is the best policy – when men have decided to reject the gospel message [Matthew 10:12-14], to oppose and to even persecute us [Matthew 10:23], and when words can only entangle us in futile arguments. In times of great trial, God has promised to give us calmness and peace [John 14:27].

In his rage, Caiaphas put Jesus under oath of the living God [under a pretence of reverence to God] to answer his question. Jesus did not answer – not because He feared death but to avoid accusations of contempt for the name of God. He reaffirmed forcefully that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and therefore God Himself! The Jews and religious leaders knew that Christ had made this claim many times before but they refused to accept it. It was a rebuke to them that they too must confess that Jesus is the Christ [Philippians 2:11] and that His humiliation in their wicked hands would soon end. He would be exalted and would ascend to heaven, to return one day as Judge, Conqueror and King of kings to judge them [Daniel 7:13-14].

The Day of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus will be a terrible Day of Judgement for those who have rejected Him. But what a wonderful day it will be for us who are redeemed by His precious blood. We will be like Him – O Glorious Day!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 4
PSALM 77

THOUGHT

Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen. – Revelation 1:7

18 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 26:65-68

LESSON

Guilty as charged
and beaten

VERSES 66-67

*What think ye?
They answered and said,
He is guilty of death.
Then did they spit in His face,
and buffeted Him;
and others smote Him
with the palms of their hands.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 5
PSALM 78:1-38

THOUGHT

On Jesus' true confession that He is the Christ, the Son of God, Ananias accused Him of blasphemy, guilty of death. The Sanhedrin echoed in agreement. God had ordained that His Son should be condemned on His own innocence, purity and truth. In accusing Him, they were committing blasphemy themselves. Ananias and his cohort, like all evil men whose hearts are hardened with hatred and malice, will forever reject the truth.

Jesus' deity had been proven, known and seen by them through the mighty miracles He had done. Yet a proud, reprobate sinner always refuses to acknowledge his sinful estate. Being unrepentant, he would spurn God's love, offer of forgiveness and salvation, thereby falling into condemnation. Jesus' bold confession on this occasion is an example to us. We ought not to shrink when the occasion arises for us to testify for Him, remembering that "whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven [Matthew 10:32].

Jesus was then subjected to all sorts of indignities – mockery, beatings, being spat on the face. Jesus willingly endured the abuse and shame for our sakes. Even as we by His grace strive to serve Him faithfully, remember His words "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" [Matthew 5:11].

If we were ever called to suffer for the Lord, may He be merciful to grant us grace to endure patiently. But while He drank the whole bitter cup, ours, if ever, is hardly a few drops.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. – Isaiah 53:5

19 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 22:55-60

LESSON
Peter's denials

VERSE 57

*And he denied Him, saying,
Woman, I know Him not.*

The Bible's account of Peter's denial of Jesus is sad, shocking and deeply humbling to the pride of man. It holds many spiritual lessons for us. Peter's sin was most aggravating because he was the chief of the disciples, having been commended by the Master and accorded more privileges than any other man. At the Lord's Supper, Peter boastfully declared his loyalty to Jesus, saying he was prepared to die for Him.

How then could Peter have fallen? He was proud, self-confident and negligent in prayer. Though his master told him to be prayerful and watchful, Peter fell asleep and kept "afar off" his Master. Peter concealed his identity when he joined the company of the crowd that mocked and cursed his Master. Pressured by the hostile crowd, Peter had denied Jesus, "cursing and swearing". Peter's initial "small steps" led to his big fall.

Backsliding does not occur suddenly but begins in trivialising sin as "just a bad habit". Indulging in "little sins" is a chronic spiritual disease that eventually leads to spiritual death. Private sin precedes public sin. Lest we be too quick to judge Peter, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" [1 Corinthians 10:12]; the steps that led to Peter's fall can cause us to fall too.

Have we denied Jesus by concealing our faith? Have we failed to testify for Him for fear of embarrassment, ridicule, losing worldly friends, position, promotion and business opportunities? Have we feared man more than we love Jesus? Jesus' commandment is for us to witness for Him. May God have mercy and forgive us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 6
PSALM 78:39-72

THOUGHT

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.
– Proverbs 29:25

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 22:61-62

LESSON

Peter wept bitterly

VERSES 61-62

*And the Lord turned,
and looked upon Peter.
And Peter remembered
the word of the Lord,
how He had said unto him,
Before the cock crow,
thou shalt deny me thrice.
And Peter went out,
and wept bitterly.*

After Peter had denied Jesus the third time and the cock crowed, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. Despite the pain in His battered body, and knowing that He will receive more abuse and a painful death, Jesus still cared for His erring disciple. He looked upon Peter with sorrow, pity and love. As Peter's eyes met those of his Master, whose face was bruised and covered with sputum, Peter remembered Christ's prediction. Peter reflected on how he broke his promises and had forgotten his claims of Jesus being precious to him, and he wept bitterly.

The denials of Jesus' friends hurt Him more than the blows from His enemies [Psalm 55:12-14]. Yet God's pardoning grace and the Saviour's infinite, forgiving love were revealed when Jesus looked at Peter. Though Peter faltered when he let go of Jesus' hand, Jesus still held onto Peter's. How many a time we would have fallen, too, had Jesus not held onto us!

What a bitter and wretched feeling we experience when we realise that we have fallen away from Jesus [Jeremiah 2:17]. Peter wept bitterly when he was convicted of his sins – tears of godly sorrow that “worketh repentance to salvation”. In contrast, the worldly remorse Judas Iscariot felt did not lead to salvation.

Let us learn from this sad lesson of Peter's that we need to always watch and pray lest we fall. If we do fall, we have hope because our loving Saviour is full of compassion and ready to forgive if we come to Him in true repentance.

THOUGHT

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.
– Psalm 51:17

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 7
PSALM 79

21 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:1-4

LESSON

Judas' regrets

VERSE 3

*Then Judas, which had
betrayed Him, when he saw
that He was condemned,
repented himself,
and brought again
the thirty pieces of silver
to the chief priests and elders.*

There were two main culprits involved in the death of Jesus. They were Judas Iscariot – one of Jesus' 12 disciples; and the Sanhedrin – the ruling body of the Jews. The latter had secured false witnesses and had formulated the charges such that the Romans would be forced to condemn Christ as a revolutionary.

The religionists saw Jesus as a threat to their religion, position and security. It was an open secret that these Jews were plotting to kill Jesus [John 5:18; 7:1, 19-20]. Judas wanted to make the best out of an already bad situation and had agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver [Matthew 26:14-16].

However, after witnessing how Jesus was being unjustly condemned by the Sanhedrin [Matthew 26:57-68], Judas repented. The guilt and remorse boiling up within him led to his deep conviction of sin and repentance. Judas said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" [v. 4]. But, Judas was repentant to the priests and elders but not to God.

Repentance means to change and to turn away from sin to God [Isaiah 55:7]. When we sense guilt for real sin, we should repent and turn from it. But to whom we turn is the critical factor. Turning away from sin is not enough. Changing and walking away from sin is not enough. We must turn our faces towards God and ask Him to help us. We must cut off the sins in our lives and walk with Him instead.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 8
PSALM 80

THOUGHT

Possessions which are secured through evil ways will eat away a person's mind and heart. Flee from these evil and turn to God.

22 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:5-10

LESSON

Thirty pieces of silver

VERSE 5

*And he cast down the pieces
of silver in the temple,
and departed and went
and hanged himself.*

The priests and elders totally ignored Judas' plea of guilt for betraying Jesus. Judas knew the religionists were not going to change their verdict against Jesus. Neither were they going to help him in his desperate need. In an act of frustration and anger, of hopelessness and helplessness, Judas threw the 30 pieces of silver into the court at the feet of the priests. Judas fell into utter despair as he felt his sin was too terrible to be forgiven. He eventually hanged himself.

We should never abandon ourselves to despair nor be haunted with helplessness and hopelessness. God's mercy is so great and so sufficient that it will cover any sin. All we need to do is to come to Him, confess and repent, and He will forgive and deliver us.

Here we also see the inconsistencies, corruption and deception of the lives of the chief priests. Instead of serving God, they sought false witnesses to condemn an innocent man (Jesus) to death. Instead of helping a desperate man (Judas), they ignored him. They took the 30 pieces of silver from the treasury to bribe Judas, yet they would not take the same money and put it back into the treasury as they now deemed it unclean. Instead they used the blood money to buy a public cemetery hoping that such a service to the public would quieten any dissent over the death of Jesus.

As believers we should never use and twist our faith to suit our own needs and desires.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

DANIEL 9
PSALM 81

THOUGHT

Both Peter and Judas sinned against the Lord. Peter repented and was received by the Lord but Judas gave up in utter despair and hanged himself. Regret can lead to repentance or to remorse and destruction.

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:1-7

LESSON

Jesus before Pilate

VERSE 1

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate.

Three charges were levelled against Jesus. He was charged with being a revolutionary, thus committing sedition against Rome. This was false as Jesus was pointing people towards God's kingdom, which was not of this world [John 18:36]. He was charged with disobeying the law of the nation, in particular of not paying taxes to Caesar. This was also false as Jesus taught that obedience to earthly government was absolutely essential for the believer [Luke 20:19-26]. Finally He was charged with claiming to be King, and hence a rival to Caesar, which in the eyes of Rome would be the most serious offence.

Pilate scornfully asked Jesus, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" To that, Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it" [v. 3]. But Jesus's kingdom is not of this world. His kingdom is spiritual [John 18:36-37].

Pilate found no fault in Jesus [Luke 23:4, 14, 15, 22]. He was aware that the Jewish authorities were simply envious of Jesus and His threat to their security. Yet Pilate had to tread carefully with the Jewish authorities lest he fall into their disfavour and they report him to Rome. He might lose his position and wealth. So, when he heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he saw a way out – he sent Jesus to Herod, who was the ruler of Galilee.

Despite Pilate's ability and position, he was morally weak. He wavered under the pressure of the accusers. He gave in to the world, going along with their wishes, even though he found Jesus innocent.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 10
PSALM 82

THOUGHT

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon – Luke 16:13.

24 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 18:36

LESSON
My kingdom
is not of this world

VERSE 36

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.

An earthly kingdom is based on hierarchy and power structures. The higher your position of authority, the more power you have. You also rule over more people. Citizens of a country live under its authority. Worldly kingdoms are protected by military power, and their soldiers fight and give their lives to protect their government and people.

But in Jesus' kingdom, the King was the servant of all – healing the sick, caring for the needy, washing the feet of His disciples and willingly giving His life to save us. Jesus' kingdom does not advance by violence or power. His followers are not called to fight their enemies but to love them, to do good to them and to bless them, just as God pours out His love and blessings on good and bad alike.

The nature of Jesus' kingdom is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men, set up in their hearts and conscience. Its weapons are spiritual; it is not needed to oppose any kingdoms but only those of sin and Satan. Its main goal is to speak the Truth and to save souls. The kingdom of God is made up of people who put His will above their own; who serve others rather than themselves; who give sacrificially of themselves in order to bless others.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you" [Luke 17:21b]. So let us live as faithful followers of Jesus our King, by putting His teaching into practice and preaching the gospel to save lost souls.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 11
PSALM 83

THOUGHT

Beloved, see the real Jesus today and worship Him. He cannot be ignored, used, or gotten rid of. He is King.

25 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:8-12

LESSON

Jesus before Herod

VERSE 11

*And Herod with his men of
war set Him at nought,
and mocked Him, and arrayed
Him in a gorgeous robe,
and sent Him again to Pilate.*

Pilate lacked the courage to do what was right. He knew Jesus was innocent, yet he sought to escape his duty to declare the truth. As Herod the ruler of Galilee was in town for the Passover, Pilate had conveniently handed Jesus who was a Galilean to Herod for trial.

Herod was a cruel king. He was the king who had John the Baptist beheaded. He was also the king who put James, the half-brother of Jesus, to death. Herod had “heard many things of Christ” yet he had refused to truly listen, save believing. He was “exceeding glad” to see Jesus, with the hope that Jesus would entertain him with some miracles [v. 8]. He was not interested in the Truth about Jesus; neither did he count Him important.

Jesus knew the hopelessness of Herod’s wicked and unresponsive heart. As such, despite Herod’s questioning, Jesus “answered him nothing” [v. 9]. Because Jesus would not answer or do any signs, Herod ordered his soldiers to beat and mock Jesus. So rather than Jesus entertaining him with a magic trick, Herod was entertained as his soldiers mocked Jesus. They dressed Jesus in kingly clothes to make fun of Him and then sent Him back to Pilate. What is important is that even the wicked and perverse King Herod found no reason that Jesus should be put to death.

Many like Herod count Jesus as unimportant. They are not interested in Jesus or His claim. They stubbornly exclude Him from their lives. They cannot be more wrong.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DANIEL 12
PSALM 84

THOUGHT

Men may reject and hate Christ; they may judge Christ not worthy to be the Lord of their lives. But the fact is this: Christ came to love and save men.

26 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:15-26

LESSON

Barabbas for Jesus

VERSES 20-21

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

In this passage we have the account of some events leading to Christ's death on the cross. In particular, we see that the world preferred a murderer over the Son of God [Acts 3:14], highlighting the depraved nature of man. The inability of man to choose the things of God can be clearly seen in the choice that the multitude made that day.

Despite knowing that Barabbas was a murderer, they would rather have him than Jesus, someone who had performed many miracles and healed their sick and wounded. Similarly, if we had not the love of God in us, we would be equally unable to own Christ as our Lord and Saviour [1 John 4:19]. Let us remember that if it were not for God's love and grace towards us, we would have been no different from the crowd that day, and would prefer a sinful man over a sinless Saviour.

Secondly, we see in this short account a wonderful story of mercy as well. Because Jesus was there, Barabbas' actions were pardoned and he was set free. Let us not be quick to condemn Barabbas – we are no less guilty than the murderer who walked free that day because of Christ.

No matter how severe we think our sins are, no matter how many times we have fallen, let us remember that Jesus is able to cleanse us from all manner of iniquity. When we sin, let us come before Him with a humble and contrite heart, sincerely repenting of our sins and asking Him to forgive them.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 1
PSALM 85

MEDITATE

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:9

27 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:27-30

LESSON

Crown of thorns

VERSE 29

And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

Here, we have an account of the cruelty Jesus endured at the hands of Pilate's soldiers. Since He claimed to be the Messiah, they had garbed Him in a purple robe, crowned Him with a crown of thorns, gave Him a poor imitation of a sceptre and then knelt before Him. While reading this passage, we may feel aghast at the great lengths the soldiers went to mock our Lord. However, let us ensure that we too do not mock Him who died for our sins.

The soldiers paid lip-service to Jesus and hailed Him as the King of the Jews. However, we can clearly see that through their actions, they did not believe Him to be so. Similarly, as children of Christ, we so easily claim that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. However, do our actions and words show that He indeed is?

Just as the soldiers mocked Christ by giving Him a crown of thorns, do we also pierce Him with a crown of thorns when we call Him our King yet do not obey His will? Are we any different from the soldiers who with their lips hail Him as King of the Jews yet in the same instance spit upon Him by the things we say?

Even as we see the suffering that Christ endured for our sakes, let it be a reminder for us to be holy, even as He is holy [1 Peter 1:16], lest we be guilty of being hypocrites who claim that He is our Lord yet act otherwise.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 2
PSALM 86

THOUGHT

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.

– Matthew 7:21

28 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:4-11

LESSON

Pilate's pseudo-power

VERSE 11

Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.

In this account of Pilate interrogating our Lord, we see that Pilate found no fault in Him. Yet, he delivered Jesus into the hands of the Jews because he was afraid. Instead of dispensing justice, he bowed to the will of the crowd. Despite that, while he was interrogating Jesus, he claimed that he was powerful – that he had the ability to decide Christ's life or death. Much like Pilate, we may often think that because of the position we hold in our jobs, our greater experience and seniority in service in the church, or even because we were elected to be in charge of certain projects, we are therefore, in a position of power.

To this, we see Jesus' reply – that we would have no power, no such high office nor station in life, if it is not given by our Heavenly Father. Therefore, whatever our standing in life, no matter how elevated our status be in the eyes of man, let us not forget that it is God who has enabled us to be there. We should therefore be humble and not lord over others by making threats and needless displays of authority like how Pilate has threatened Christ in verse 10. These displays merely serve to puff us up with self-importance.

Secondly, let us also seek to perform our duties with a keen awareness of what He has done for us. With that in mind, we should be conscious of every opportunity to give Him the glory and to be a good example of our faith [1 Timothy 4:12].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 3
PSALM 87

THOUGHT

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. – Jeremiah 9:24

29 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:12-16

LESSON

Pilate delivers Jesus
to be crucified

VERSE 12

*And from thenceforth Pilate
sought to release Him:
but the Jews cried out, saying,
If thou let this man go,
thou art not Caesar's friend:
whosoever maketh himself a
king speaketh against Caesar.*

From chapters 18 and 19, we see that Pilate was more and more convinced that Jesus was innocent, and was looking for an opportunity to let Him go free. He had offered to pardon Jesus, but the crowd chose Barabbas. He declared that he believed that Jesus was innocent, yet the crowd claimed that He was guilty of breaking Jewish law. Finally, he even claimed that Jesus was their king, yet the crowd responded that their only king was Caesar. This was irony at its finest, a Gentile seeking to pardon Christ while His own people called for His blood. Indeed, it is as our Lord has said in John 15:18, that the world hated Him.

Pilate's behaviour showed that even though he had power and authority to pardon Christ, he was too afraid to use it in a just manner. He was afraid of the Jews, especially with the accusation in verse 12 that if he were to let Christ go, he would be guilty of treason. Because of this fear, he allowed the death of Christ.

Do we, in our different callings, allow the fear of the world, or of the people therein, to govern how we act as well? Are we stepping aside and allowing sin to happen because we are afraid of persecution if we interfere? Let us remember that this is being an accomplice to sin. Instead, let us strive to not be afraid of what man can do unto us, and to pursue righteousness, for the glory of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 4
PSALM 88

MEDITATE

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.
– Proverbs 3:27-28

30 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:31-32

LESSON

Simon Cyrene

VERSE 32

*And as they came out,
they found a man of Cyrene,
Simon by name: him they
compelled to bear His cross.*

In this short account, we see that a man named Simon, from the city of Cyrene, was asked to bear the cross on behalf of Christ even as He went towards Golgotha. We do not know much about this man, save that he is probably the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were prominent Christians [Acts 19:33; Romans 16:13].

Simon was compelled by the Roman soldiers to bear the cross of Christ. This was not a task that he desired to do. Simon was probably a follower of Jesus, and would not have liked to be an accessory to His death. Yet we see here that he was forced to bear the cross and follow Christ to Golgotha, and that while this was not a pleasant task to undertake, it was part of fulfilling God's plan of salvation.

In the same way, we can be reminded of Matthew 16:24. We see that just as it was a disagreeable thing for Simon to take up the cross of Jesus, we equally may find it disagreeable to deny our fleshly lusts. Even while we may say that we want to follow Christ, we may want to be more conformed to His image, we have definitely experienced the difficulty of denying the appetites of the old man within. As such, we can be thankful for our salvation in the first place, for it would be impossible to deny such fleshly lusts were we not constrained by Christ, just as Simon was compelled to bear Christ's cross, in the first place.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 5
PSALM 89:1-26

THOUGHT

Have I put my hand to the plough and looked back?

31 OCTOBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:27-32

LESSON

Jesus to
the weeping women

VERSE 31

*For if they do these things in a
green tree, what shall be done
in the dry?*

As Christ approached Golgotha, there followed Him a great number of mourners, weeping over His impending death. Yet, we see that He told them not to weep for Him. He was more than willing to die on the cross. What perfect obedience to His Father! What love for man! Let us never cease to marvel at the thought of such a gracious God.

At the same time, we see a warning to the women who wept. They were to weep for themselves, for great desolation would be coming. This was in reference to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in the near future. At the same time, this can also be applied to Christ's second coming.

In verse 31, Christ calls Himself the green tree – a tree which is not adapted for burning, just as Christ, who was blameless, did not have to bear any punishment for sin. Yet if the green tree, if the One in Whom was found no sin, was punished for sins, how much more would the dry trees, the ones who were adapted for burning, in whom was much sin, be punished.

This is indeed a sober reminder. Let us remember that judgement begins at the house of God, and that if the righteous will scarcely be saved, the end of the unrepentant sinners would be a dreadful one indeed. May this be at the forefront of our minds even as we go about our lives. Let us be mournful over the state of the lost sinners and be looking for opportunities to proclaim Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 6
PSALM 89:27-52

MEDITATE

For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?
– 1 Peter 4:17-18

1 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:33

LESSON

Calvary

VERSE 33

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull.

The soldiers took Jesus to Calvary, which was also called Golgotha. It was a hill near Jerusalem, a prominent public place to execute the criminals. The name was Latin for “Place of the Skull”, the very place that symbolised death. Christ’s crucifixion on the cross is an act to deliver mankind from eternal death.

Jesus is indeed our wonderful Saviour. He was sinless and yet He was willing to shed His own precious blood on the cross to redeem us from the bondage of sin. “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” [2 Corinthians 5:21].

In the Old Testament, the animals were sacrificed outside the temple and the high priest had to carry the blood of animals into the most holy place. Jesus was led out of Jerusalem to be executed. The Lamb of God was “slaughtered” and became our sacrifice of atonement. He paid the penalty of our sins and delivered us from God’s wrath.

Our sins are pardoned and we have the hope of eternal salvation when we accept Jesus Christ as our own Saviour. We need to trust in our Lord and Saviour. As Jesus suffered at Calvary to make us justified through His own blood, let us stay faithful to Christ, take up the cross and follow Jesus. Strive to live for Christ; cleanse our thoughts, consecrate ourselves so that we can be pleasing to God and be His channel of blessings to others.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 7
PSALM 90

REMINDER

To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. – Romans 3:26

2 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:34

LESSON
Crucified
at the third hour

VERSE 34

They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.

Before the soldiers nailed Jesus on the cross, they gave Him vinegar mixed with a narcotic drug called gall, which was to numb His sense and help reduce His pain. This event was foretold in the Old Testament: “They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink” [Psalm 69:21].

But Jesus refused to take it. He was sent to earth to be the Sacrificial Lamb, to taste death for all men and He would do so in full consciousness. As stated in Hebrews 2:9, Jesus obeyed the will of God to suffer and to taste death for every man. God loved the world of helpless sinners so much that He sent His only begotten Son to the world to live without sin in the human flesh. He then sent His beloved Son to the cross to die for the sins of all humanity.

It is only with the sacrifice of a blameless Lamb (Jesus) that our sins are forgiven once and for all, and those who believe and accept Jesus as Saviour will surely enjoy the joy of eternal salvation. We are reconciled to God through the death of His Son.

We ought to remember the great love of God for us. It is with the same love that Christ sent the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us every day. For all of us who believe in Jesus, we come to God’s family by faith and gain peace and joy in and through Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 8
PSALM 91

PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for sending Your only Son to save us. May we remember the monumental significance of Jesus’ sacrifice and stay clear from the temptations of sins. Keep us strong and faithful in You, Lord. Amen.

3 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:35-36

LESSON

Casting lots for the robe

VERSE 35

*And they crucified Him,
and parted His garments,
casting lots: that it might be
fulfilled which was spoken by
the prophet, They parted My
garments among them,
and upon My vesture
did they cast lots.*

It was customary for criminals then to be executed naked. The executing soldiers were also allowed to take the clothing of those they crucified. Christ's garments were divided among four soldiers.

The coat or vesture, a close-fitting vest, was the most valuable piece of clothing but it was seamless. It was the coat of the high priest, one long garment. The soldiers had to cast lots to determine who would get the woven garment as they did not want to tear it [John 19:23-24]. This act fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22:18. The vesture was a symbol of Christ, the High Priest, the Mediator. Christ is the bridge between man and God.

The soldiers stripped Jesus of His garments. But Jesus stripped Himself of His glory in order to become man and die for us. Sin is the nakedness of man. As stated in Revelation 3:18, Paul advised the Laodiceans to buy white clothes [symbolises righteousness] so that they can cover their shameful nakedness. Christ had to endure and bear the shame of the cross for us. In return, He had destroyed the power of the devil and delivered those with faith in Christ from eternal death.

The soldiers sat down and watched over Jesus, waiting for Him to die. This was also part of God's plan to assure that Jesus really died on the cross. There should not be any doubt; Jesus did die on the cross. All events were in the plan of God. He had allowed them to happen according to His divine purpose.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 9
PSALM 92

THOUGHT

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. – 1 Timothy 2:5-6

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:37

LESSON

Pilate's inscription

VERSE 37

*And set up over His head
His accusation written,
THIS IS JESUS
THE KING
OF THE JEWS.*

It was common for the crucified criminal to have a notice placed on top of him so that the public could read and know the crime committed, which might also serve as a warning to others. Pilate wrote that Jesus was the King of the Jews. Although the Jewish religious leaders objected and requested for an amendment, Pilate refused to change it. This, again, was according to God's divine plan. The very charge against Jesus had proclaimed His glory, honour and deity.

The signage was written in three languages, Greek (the intellectual Jews and Gentiles), Latin (for the Roman occupation forces), and Hebrew (for the native Jews). Jesus is not just the King of the Jews, he is the King of all, Gentiles included. He did not die only for the Jews, but for all who had believed in Christ. The death and resurrection of Jesus granted Christ and His believers victory over the devil.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and our Saviour, is the very person of Emmanuel. Jesus is GOD, One with the Father, and with us, through His Holy Spirit. Jesus is the High Priest, the appointed Mediator, Lord of all lords, and King of all kings. Through Christ we come to the Father, and through Christ the Father sends all blessings to us, by the influence and working of the Holy Spirit. As confirmed in Revelation 1:18, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 10
PSALM 93

THOUGHT

And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. – Philippians 2:8-9.

5 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:39-43

LESSON

The mocking
from the crowd

VERSES 41-42

*Likewise also the chief priests
mocking Him, with the scribes
and elders, said, He saved
others; Himself He cannot
save. If He be the King of
Israel, let Him now come down
from the cross,
and we will believe Him.*

The religionists and the passers-by mocked Jesus' claim to be the Saviour. They verbally abused him. In their minds they were asking, how could Jesus save others if He could not even save Himself? These people taunted Christ's claim as King of Israel and the Son of God. They were shaking their heads as a sign of insult. They were ridiculing Jesus for claiming to have the power to destroy and rebuild the temple in three days. They committed the sin of cursing and profaning the name of the Lord.

Jesus could have used His power to save Himself; God could have taken away the cup of suffering from Him. However, it is not the will of God to do so. God sent His son to save the world. Jesus Himself fulfilled this greatest love by dying for us so that we could be forgiven of all our sins and be reconciled to God.

Jesus was willing to obey God; He trusted God the Father perfectly. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" [John 4:34]. The sinful crowd that saw Jesus on the cross misunderstood His salvation and messiahship.

We should be thankful for the grace of God. We should be grateful to Christ for delivering us from transgressions so that we may receive eternal salvation. Let us continue to grow in love towards Jesus, ourselves and others. Live our life as God has instructed.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 11
PSALM 94

PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for Your grace and love. Help me to be aware of my own sinfulness. Help me to love others unconditionally, like how You have loved me. Amen.

6 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:34

LESSON

Forgive them

VERSE 34

*Then said Jesus,
Father, forgive them; for they
know not what they do.
And they parted His raiment,
and cast lots.*

The value of the cross of Calvary rests entirely upon the Person who was crucified on it. The crucifixion and death of Jesus has value only because He is the Christ, the Son of God. The value of His death is reflected in the prayers and sayings of our Lord Jesus on the cross.

Despite the injustice that was done to Him – the mockings and scourging, and the cruelty of the instrument of crucifixion – the first words that came forth from the lips of our Lord Jesus were: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” [vs. 23:34].

That these were the first words of our Lord Jesus on the cross was not coincidence. Christ, conscious of His eternal Sonship, prayed the prayer of forgiveness on behalf of the people before God the Father turned His face away from His beloved Son. The love of Christ is seen in His desire to forgive the very people who were responsible for taking His life.

Biblical forgiveness is not an exemption of punishment. It is not a waiver of penalty. For God to let the sinner free without any punishment would be to go against His nature as a just and righteous God. In biblical forgiveness, both justice and mercy must be satisfied. And both were satisfied in the Person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord was able to pray for the forgiveness of the people because He had suffered the punishment on their behalf. Christ “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” [1 Peter 2:24].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 12
PSALM 95

PRAYER

In praying for His enemies, our Lord Jesus teaches us that there is hope for the greatest sinner. There is no sin so heinous that Christ could not forgive.

7 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:25-27

LESSON

Behold your son

VERSE 26

*When Jesus therefore
saw His mother,
and the disciple standing by,
whom He loved,
He saith unto His mother,
Woman, behold thy son!*

When our Lord Jesus was just an eight-day old baby, He was presented for circumcision. In that temple that day, Simeon said to Mary, “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul” [Luke 2:35a]. How odd that such words should be spoken to a new mother on such an auspicious day. But Simeon’s words would be fulfilled some 30 years later on Golgotha. There, at the foot of the cross, stood a band of devoted ladies, including Mary, our Lord’s mother. How it must have pained her to see her Son on the cross.

As Mary stood at the foot of the cross, our Lord Jesus turned to Mary and said, “Woman, behold thy son!” [vs. 26]. We should not take the address as one of disrespect; that our Lord had Mary on His mind even at the hour of His death speaks of His love for Mary.

Even on the cross, our Lord did not overlook His responsibilities to Mary. Our spiritual duties do not diminish one’s commitment in familiar relationships. On the contrary, it is the redeemed person who must show the deepest love for his family.

Our Lord Jesus’ statement also expresses a deeper relationship with Mary. He was her son. He is also her Saviour. Mary, in her song of praise [Luke 1:46-48], recognised her need for salvation. At the foot of the cross, she would come to understand that her relationship with Jesus went beyond a mother-son relationship. For the good of her soul, it ought also to be that of a sinner-Saviour relationship.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 13
PSALM 96

THOUGHT

The light that shines farthest shines brightest at home.

8 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:39-43

LESSON

Thou shalt be with Me
in paradise

VERSE 43

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

On the day that our Lord Jesus was crucified, there were three crosses on Golgotha. On these were two sinners, and the third was the Son of God. The prophet Isaiah had foretold some 700 years before the event happened that our Lord Jesus “made His grave with the wicked” and He would be “numbered with the transgressors” [Isaiah 53:9, 12].

Unrepentant even at the door step of eternal damnation, one of the malefactors railed at Jesus, “If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us” [Luke 23:39]. The other criminal, however, turned to our Lord Jesus and said, “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom” [Luke 23:42] – one simple statement that carries with it the eternal hope of salvation.

In the person of this repentant thief, we see a representative of all converted sinners. Like him, every man has to acknowledge that he is a sinner. Like him, no man can complain that God was unfair in His judgement of our sins. Like him, we have to admit that “we receive the due reward of our deeds” [Luke 23:41].

The thief’s humble confession teaches three important truths. First, every sinner is helpless and hopeless, and only Jesus Christ has the power to save sinners. Second, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus assures of the believer’s resurrection. Because He lives, we “shall live also” [John 14:19]. Third, he entrusted his eternal destiny into the hands of our Lord Jesus. In confessing Jesus as King, the thief was certain that his future would be a bright one.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HOSEA 14
PSALM 97

THOUGHT

There is hope even at the gates of hell. It is never too late until one crosses the threshold into eternity.

9 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:44-45

LESSON

Darkness at noon

VERSE 44

*And it was
about the sixth hour,
and there was a darkness
over all the earth
until the ninth hour.*

Our Lord Jesus declared, “I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life. [John 8:12]. Yet on the cross, because of our sin, He dwelt in darkness. The darkness enveloped the whole world from noon for three hours. There is no plausible natural explanation except to say an act of God, expressing His anger at sin, and the dreadfulness of life without the Light.

It is impossible for sinners living under the common grace of God’s sun to have a full sense of the saving grace of God’s Son, until God removed the sun and for a brief moment abandoned His Son.

The crucifixion of Christ began with much spectacle. The street to the cross was thronged with crowds eager to watch a man die. At noon, nature, as it were in deep respect, veiled itself in darkness so that no man could see the final hours of the Son of God as He bore “our sins in His own body on the tree” [1Peter 2:24a].

Sinful eyes are not allowed to behold the dying of our Lord Jesus as He suffered. In a sense, it is sacrilegious to even re-enact on the movie screen because what happened on Calvary was far worse than any physical suffering. The depiction of the flesh torn by the whips and nails would always be short of what our Lord Jesus suffered. He bore the sins of humanity stretched across millennia of time in the space of six hours. It is pain and punishment too much for the human eye to see.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JOEL 1
PSALMS 98-99

THOUGHT

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died,
For man the creature’s sin.

10 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:46

LESSON

Eli, Eli,
lama sabachthani

VERSE 46

*And about the ninth hour
Jesus cried with a loud voice,
saying, Eli, Eli,
lama sabachthani?
that is to say,
My God, my God,
why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Before the sixth hour, the people were mocking and cursing the Saviour. At noon, the whole world was covered in darkness as our Saviour hung on the cross. Together with the darkness, there was an eerie silence. And out of this darkness came a forlorn cry: “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” [Matthew 27:46]

This was the cry of the righteous and sinless. Here was the Christ whom Pontius Pilate had thrice pronounced innocent. Here was the Messiah whose life the Jews had lustily demanded in exchange for of a convicted murderer. Here was the Messiah who bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and chastised for our peace. [Isaiah 53:4-5]. This was the cry of Lamb of God who “taketh away the sin of the world” [John 1:29].

This was the cry of utter despair. The Son and the Father had an uncommon unity. It was a unity that we could never grasp, and neither could we understand the intensity of separation when the beloved Son was forsaken by the Father.

This is also a cry that is proof of the love of our Lord Jesus. “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]. God had made His Son to be “sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” [2 Corinthians 5:21].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JOEL 2
PSALMS 100-101

THOUGHT

Our Lord Jesus drank the cup of God’s wrath so that we need not taste a drop of His righteous judgement. He was forsaken so that we could be forgiven.

11 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:28

LESSON

I thirst!

VERSE 28

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Betrayed by one of His 12 disciples, forsaken by the rest, beaten by His own people, mocked by the Romans, crucified on the cross, and the only one request from our Lord Jesus was, “I thirst”. These words were spoken shortly before our Lord Jesus gave up the ghost.

The Westminster Confession of faith describes our Lord Jesus as “two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person . . . which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.” [WCF, Chapter 8, Section 2]

Our Lord Jesus is all together God and all together man. In His perfect humanity, He cried out, “I thirst.” This was an expression of His sufferings. Our Lord’s thirst affirmed His position as the Redeemer of sinners. The Father did not make the suffering easier for His Son; neither did the Father lessen the wrath upon the Christ. It was the Father’s will that the Son’s throat was dried [Psalm 69:3], and the Son submitted.

The thirst of our Lord Jesus speaks also of the universal need of man. Man’s thirst is a spiritual one which cannot be relieved through physical water. Christ alone is the living water that can bring life to a parched soul. “I thirst” is also our cry. But how pleasant it must be to hear that Jesus Christ can satisfy, for He said, “whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst” [John 4:14a]. Hallelujah!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JOEL 3
PSALM 102

THOUGHT

In our Lord’s thirst, we see a Saviour who not only understands the spiritual dryness of our souls, but also shows that He was the “well of water springing up into everlasting life” [John 4:14b].

12 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:47-49

LESSON

Sour vinegar

VERSE 48

*And straightway one of them
ran, and took a sponge,
and filled it with vinegar,
and put it on a reed,
and gave Him to drink.*

There were two occasions when our Lord Jesus was given vinegar. Just before His crucifixion, the Roman soldiers “gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink” [Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23]. This drink was believed to be a sedative with a numbing effect on pain; that drink our Lord Jesus refused. But now on the cross, our Lord Jesus received the vinegar, a drink popular among the poor to quench thirst.

Our Lord Jesus’ first miracle was to turn water into good wine [John 2:10]. Sadly, at the end of His life, men would only offer Him sour wine. The world boasts of man’s innate goodness, but this account confirms man’s natural enmity with God. Man in his sinful state renders evil for good. John reminds us that our Lord Jesus “came unto His own, and His own received Him not” [John 1:11]. Man, left to himself, rejects, mocks, and crucifies Christ.

Some would say that this act of giving vinegar is proof of man’s compassion, but according to Mark’s account, even the one who offered the vinegar, mocked Christ, saying, “Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down” [Mark 15:36b]. This perhaps is the picture of a sinner who while showing a little pity, nevertheless pours out his scorn upon the Saviour.

Let us be mindful of James’ reminder that out of the same mouth ought not to flow blessing and cursing [James 3:10]; that we ought not to praise Him with our lips and grieve Him with our sins.

THOUGHT

I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.
Dear fountain of delight unknown!
No longer sink below the brim;
But overflow, and pour me down
A living and life-giving stream.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS I
PSALM 103

13 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:30

LESSON

It is finished

VERSE 30

*When Jesus therefore
had received the vinegar,
He said, It is finished:
and He bowed His head,
and gave up the ghost.*

In His suffering humanity, He uttered the words, “I thirst.” Now, the suffering Saviour would assume the role of a conquering Christ, and He cried, “It is finished.” These were His words of victory over death.

It is not “I am finished.” That would have been the words of despair and hopelessness, or at best the words of a martyr dying in defeat. Rather Christ shouted, “It is finished!” It is one word in the Greek language that declares our Lord’s total accomplishment of His mission that He “came into the world to save sinners” [1 Timothy 1:15].

What was finished? Some believe that our Lord was referring to the Messianic prophecies, especially those concerning His suffering and death. But it has to be more, it is more than just the cessation of physical pain; it is the work of redemption. The separation of Father and Son because of our sin was over. The rays of victory were surging through the darkened sky, and God was smiling on His beloved Son again.

“It is finished” is also the cry of victory over death and sin. He would no longer be the Man of Sorrows, but the Victor over the grave. He would no longer be the Lamb led to the slaughter, but the Lion of Judah. For the redeemed, it means that there is nothing more to do with regard to the work of salvation. Every stitch of the garment of righteousness has been sewn. For the redeemed, it also means that we too have overcome death. “It is finished.” The enemy is defeated, the victory is won and the mission is accomplished.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 2
PSALM 104

THOUGHT

“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” [1 Corinthians 15:54b-57]. Are you living in victory over sin?

14 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 23:46

LESSON

Father, into Thy hands,
I commit My spirit

VERSE 46

*And when Jesus had cried
with a loud voice, He said,
Father, into Thy hands
I commend My spirit:
and having said thus,
He gave up the ghost.*

The final words of our Lord Jesus on the cross marked the completion of our Lord's redemptive work. The Son who proceeded from the Father [John 8:42] would now return to Him. At the height of the crucifixion, our Lord Jesus cried out "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then, Christ, bearing the sin of mankind, could not call upon God as His Father. But now the communion between Christ and God are restored, and the beloved Son returns to addressing: "Father ..."

Christ is in the presence of the Father. He is seated at the right hand of God [Hebrews 12:2]; He is exalted by the Father [Philippians 2:9]; and He would be reinstated with the glory that was His before the world came into being [John 17:5].

The restored communion of Father and Son is the hope for the redeemed sinner. It means that "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" [John 1:12].

For the Christian, to be in the hands of God the Father is to be in the place of eternal security. Our Lord Jesus had promised, "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" [John 10:29]. In the Father's hands, every sinner is safe. The storms of life cannot shake us because He is sovereign. Darkness cannot overwhelm us because "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" [1 John 1:5]. Even death is of no consequence because it is "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" [2 Corinthians 5:8].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 3
PSALM 105:1-22

THOUGHT

Our security is not found in a place but in a Person. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" [Deuteronomy 33:27a].

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:51

LESSON

Temple veil torn

VERSE 51

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

This passage is all about the death of Christ. Events occurring at His crucifixion are all detailed here. It is only by God's supernatural power that those three events happened – the rending of the veil in twain, the earthquake and the opening of the rocks. Other incidents were also mentioned in the next few verses.

The Lord Jesus performed many miracles in His ministry with the disciples. Now even after His death supernatural events still occurred. All these incidents proved that God was in control over everything. Such a miracle was witnessed by the priest himself when he offered incense at the evening sacrifice about the same time.

The veil, made of fine twined linen, was very thick. It refers to a thread six times doubled. What was amazing was that this happened during the time of the incense offering, so the priest and his helpers must have witnessed the whole scene. The earthquake was an indication of the divine anger at the sin of crucifying Christ. The clefts made after the rending of the rocks can still be seen today.

What is significant about the rending of the veil is that the way to God has been opened for us by the death of Christ. In a sense, it also signifies the uniting of Jew and Gentile, breaking down the partition wall between them. We have immediate access to God through His Son, our Mediator between God and men. We have this privilege to draw near to God in faith, in love and in reverence.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

AMOS 4
PSALM 105:23-45

THOUGHT

And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

– Hebrews 9:15

16 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:52-53

LESSON

Resurrection of saints

VERSE 53

*And came out of the graves
after His resurrection,
and went into the holy city,
and appeared unto many.*

What a manifestation of Christ's divine power indeed. The graves not only opened but the bodies of the saints arose. Note that this only occurred after Christ's resurrection.

Christ the First Fruit must rise first so that these saints can be resurrected to life eternal. He was the first to be raised to immortal life as the first begotten of the dead, and the firstborn from the dead. Other saints have been raised before but to a mortal life.

The saints mentioned in verse 53 went to Jerusalem and appeared to many people. It was not told to us whom they appeared to and in what way. We do not know how they disappeared. Some speculated that they either referred to the ancient patriarchs or the early martyrs. However, we must not strive to be wiser than the writings here. Since their identities were not known, we must take it by faith that these secret things belong to the Lord only. Yet there is a big difference between the resurrection to mortal life and the resurrection to eternal life. To name a few examples, Lazarus, Jairus' daughter and the son of the widow of Nain were all raised to mortal life. They will live and then die again. The saints mentioned here have glorified bodies and were raised to eternal life, together with the Lord.

What matters more is the importance of eternal life. Where will you be after you leave this world? Do you have the assurance of salvation?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 5
PSALM 106:1-23

THOUGHT

I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.

17 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:54-56

LESSON

Responses at the cross

VERSE 54

*Now when the centurion,
and they that were with
him, watching Jesus, saw the
earthquake, and those things
that were done, they feared
greatly, saying, Truly this was
the Son of God.*

Different reactions to the death of Christ on the cross can be seen here. The centurion and the other soldiers with him were greatly amazed at the events unfolding before their very eyes. On the other hand, the women who ministered to Christ in His lifetime responded from afar. Yet this company of women, perhaps some would have called them silly, had bravely followed Christ when His disciples had deserted Him.

What was outstanding about the centurion's confession was that it was done out of great fear. It was even more amazing that he recognised Jesus as the Son of God. Tradition claims that he became a devoted follower of Christ, preached the Word and even died the death of a martyr.

As for the women, many of them were equally brave even though they had followed Christ from afar. They had come a long way from Galilee to Jerusalem. Some of them were mentioned by name here, that is, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, as well as the mother of Zebedee's children. What is noteworthy is the fact that they had been faithful in following Christ. What a fine example of female constancy. Indeed believers must emulate such a response like theirs.

The question here is, "What is your response to the cross and the death of Christ?" The centurion, a captain of one hundred soldiers, a hardened Gentile soldier who had witnessed many dying the same way, believed in Christ's redemptive work of salvation on the cross.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 6
PSALM 106:24-48

THOUGHT

May our response be, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

18 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:31-34

LESSON

Jesus' side pierced

VERSE 33

*But when they came to Jesus,
and saw that
He was dead already,
they brake not His legs.*

This passage focusing on the piercing of Christ's side after His death was mentioned by the evangelist John. What the Roman soldiers did to the bodies on the crosses was in response to the Jews' superstitious dread then of leaving dead bodies on crosses over a Sabbath Day.

This obedience of the Jews in the outward observance of ceremonial laws carried also a certain element of hypocrisy. Despite the seemingly humane treatment of executed bodies, the Jews' concerns were nowhere moral. They were merely relieving themselves of any curses that might befall them had they failed to adhere to God's laws.

Hence the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ. But not a single bone of Christ was broken. He was pierced on His side instead. Verse 34 was the proof of the truth of Christ's death. The piercing was to ensure the certainty of death. Tradition says that this soldier's name was Longinus, and that, having some distemper in his eyes, he was immediately cured of it, by blood that flowed out of Christ's side unto the soldiers under the cross: significant enough, if we had any good authority for the story.

Whatever the Jews did to Christ was all within the redemptive plan of salvation. Even the governor, Pontius Pilate, with his authority could not change God's plan for mankind. He was surprised by the quickness of Christ's death. The truth is, Christ died to conquered death so that believers may be raised like Him to eternal life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 7
PSALM 107:1-20

THOUGHT

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. – Romans 8:37

19 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:35-37

LESSON

Prophecy fulfilled

VERSE 36

*For these things were done,
that the Scripture should be
fulfilled, A bone of Him
shall not be broken.*

Only the evangelist John had witnessed this miracle at the death of Christ. As such, he had the authority of an eye witness who was present at the cross. The soldiers at the death of Jesus also confirmed the prophecy fulfilled by Christ.

Not only did John attest to this truth, he also recorded in writing what he saw. Not a single bone was broken, thus fulfilling the truth of Scripture. This is to preserve the honour of the Old Testament and confirm the truth of the New Testament. John's main purpose was for his readers to believe the truth of his statement. It was a personal, direct first-hand account. These were just some of the prophecies fulfilled in Scripture. There are also many more instances of supernatural occurrences recorded for our learning in this passage.

The evidence of Christ's death was in the piercing of His side. This very act carries also great symbolism. The water and blood signify two great benefits of believers, that is justification and sanctification through Christ. The water refers to regeneration and purification, and the blood for remission and atonement.

The death of Christ opens to us the way to salvation and reconciliation to God. Would you come to Christ for spiritual cleansing, for the forgiveness of your sins which nailed Him to the cross? Pray that God would open your eyes, or those of an unbelieving loved one so that he or she may also understand the sacrificial love of the Saviour.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 8
PSALM 107:21-43

PRAYER

Our sins put Him on the Cross, but love kept Him there!

20 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:57-58

LESSON

Joseph Arimathaea

VERSE 57

*When the even was come,
there came a rich man of
Arimathaea, named Joseph,
who also himself
was Jesus' disciple.*

Joseph of Arimathaea was the man who donated his own prepared tomb for the burial of Jesus after His crucifixion. Fragments of the biography of this man are scattered in all four Gospels.

Only Matthew mentioned that he was rich [v. 57]. Mark described him as an honourable counsellor, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, who himself was also looking for the kingdom of God [Mark 15:43]. John added that he was a disciple of Jesus “but secretly for fear of the Jews” [John 19:38]. He was also spoken of as a “good man, and a just: the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them” [Luke 23:50-51]; he had not been a consenting party to the condemnation and death of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathaea had learnt from Jesus and to some extent was committed to follow Him, even if his discipleship was secret.

The apostles had forsaken our Lord. As Joseph stood beside the Cross and discerned the grace of Him Who was rich and for his sake became poor, he saw a service he could do for Jesus. Mark recorded this startling change in Joseph’s character in one outstanding word, “Joseph of Arimathaea ... went in boldly unto Pilate, and **craved** the body of Jesus” [Mark 15:43].

This was a tremendous act of courage. The light came to him when darkness seemed deepest. Pilate concurred and commanded the body to be delivered to him. Wherever and whenever the gospel is preached, Joseph of Arimathaea will always be fondly remembered.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
AMOS 9
PSALM 108

THOUGHT

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

– 1 John 4:15

21 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 19:39-40

LESSON Nicodemus

VERSE 39

*And there came also
Nicodemus, which at the first
came to Jesus by night,
and brought a mixture of
myrrh and aloes, about an
hundred pound weight.*

Nicodemus, a highly educated Pharisee and a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, stood out as one man who met the Lord Jesus early in His public ministry. He first came to Him by night to discourse with Him about His Messiahship, doctrine and miracles [John 3:1-2]. He was well-versed in Jewish traditions and customs, pious and careful in observing the laws.

Only John mentioned him three times – first as a secret enquirer after truth – truth so strong that he had to find out for himself [John 3:1]; secondly, as a defender of the Lord before the Sanhedrin [John 7:50-51]; and lastly, as a courageous saint who gave his all for his Lord and Saviour [John 19:39].

Both Joseph and Nicodemus had hesitated in trusting Jesus as their Saviour. John associated Nicodemus with Joseph in the actual burial of Christ. Nicodemus came with myrrh and aloes, a hundred pound in weight for the burial of the crucified Christ. The cross apparently changed Nicodemus just as it had changed Joseph. Broken-hearted over his Lord's death, he would now step forth in faith and love and do what he could.

Jesus' body was wrapped up in linen clothes, within which the preparation of myrrh and aloes would be laid. Thus the powder would be next to our Lord's body and interposed between the linen and His skin. Joseph provided the fine linen [Mark 15:46]. They reverently placed the Lord upon the slab in the garden tomb.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
OBADIAH
PSALM 109

THOUGHT

And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.

– 2 Corinthians 5:15

22 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:59-60

LESSON

Jesus' body placed
in a new tomb

VERSE 60

And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Joseph of Arimathaea “went in boldly unto Pilate” and with the hunger of a man eager to do a service for his Lord, besought the body of Jesus. Then in his own new tomb, prepared for his own costly burial, he laid Jesus to His rest. The devotion towards the dead body of Christ fell to him who had never made public claim to be a disciple. It is one of the deep mysteries of God’s providence in relation to individual souls.

Our Lord’s tomb was new. It was hewn out of a hard limestone rock. Decay and decomposition had never entered it. Christ’s body was the first and only body that was ever laid in this tomb. According to verse 60, it was Joseph’s own tomb. He was a rich man. This tomb was located in Joseph’s garden in the immediate vicinity of the Cross. The entrance to the tomb chamber was low from the fact that Mary had to stoop to look into the tomb [John 20:11]. So did Peter [Luke 24:12]. There was no access to it but by the door, which was watched. A great stone was rolled in front of the entrance of the tomb. A seal was affixed by the order of Pilate at the request of the Sanhedrin.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an ass “whereon never man before had sat”. So now He shall lie in a tomb wherein never man before had lain. In all things He was separate from sinners.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JONAH I
PSALMS 110-111

THOUGHT

And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death. – Isaiah 53:9a

23 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:62-66

LESSON

Roman soldiers
guarding the tomb

VERSE 64

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus placed the body of Jesus Christ in the garden tomb “and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre” [Mark 15:46b] before the Sabbath observance started.

The next day the chief priests and Pharisees ignored their own scruples of Sabbath observances and approached Pilate the Roman governor to ask him to seal and guard the tomb of Christ. They were still fearful of His bloodied body because they remembered His promise that He would rise again after three days [Matthew 20:19, 27:63; Mark 8:31, 10:34; Luke 18:33, 24:7]. They were concerned that His disciples would steal His body and claim the resurrection of Christ. Perhaps they also feared that His prophecy of His resurrection would come true. They requested Pilate to seal the tomb and make it as secure as was humanly possible.

Pilate acceded to their request. “Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch” [Matthew 27:65-66]. The way for fraud and deceit and the way into and out of the tomb was blocked.

The Roman soldiers, the seal with the Roman insignia, together with all their steps of precaution became witnesses in a few hours that Christ has risen. God made use of their precautions for His own end. Their watch shall be His guards of honour until the angels come to take their place.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JONAH 2
PSALMS 112-113

THOUGHT

Vainly they watch His bed, Jesus my Saviour,
Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!

24 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 27:61

LESSON

The two Mary's

VERSE 61

*And there was
Mary Magdalene,
and the other Mary,
sitting over against
the sepulchre.*

Women played a significant role from the very beginning of Jesus' life and ministry. They travelled up to Jerusalem on the last dreaded journey and watched Him die on the Cross. Luke tells us the names of some of them: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and many others, but in every list the name Mary Magdalene comes first. Her devotion to Christ had encouraged the others to be present at the crucifixion.

The two Mary's – Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses – were also present at Jesus' burial. Luke tells us how "the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid." Finally, Matthew indicated that two women elected to remain by the tomb for a period after Joseph had rolled the stone to the entrance and departed [v. 61].

The faithfulness of the women around Jesus in the time of crisis was striking. We see them at the Cross. They sought to anoint Jesus' body with spices and ointment. They did this out of love for Him. They discovered the empty tomb, heard the message of the two angels and told the news to the apostles.

Between the two Mary's, Mary Magdalene was one out of whom the Lord had cast out "seven devils" [Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2]. She was the first to see our Lord after He rose from the dead, the first to hear His voice, the first to hold conversation with Him and an honoured messenger of the risen Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JONAH 3
PSALMS 114-115

THOUGHT

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. – Romans 1:16

25 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 20:1

LESSON

The first morning
of the Resurrection

VERSE 1

*The first day of the week
cometh Mary Magdalene early,
when it was yet dark,
unto the sepulchre,
and seeth the stone taken away
from the sepulchre.*

The resurrection of Jesus is, strictly speaking, never described anywhere in Scripture. No one witnessed it, but many have experienced it. No one can explain it, but many feel its effects. The earth felt the effects. It reeled and rocked. The ground quaked. The rock erupted. The angel felt the effects – like a lightning had descended from heaven and rolled back the stone. The guards felt the effects – the ones keeping watch over the tomb became as dead, scared stiff. The women felt the effects – what a shock it was to discover an empty burial place.

What effect does the resurrection have on you? Does it move you? Does it touch you? The point is that no matter how bleak it looked on that day Jesus was crucified, the resurrection made all the difference. It demonstrates that no matter how bad things might look right now, God has the power to change circumstances. God remains in control and we can be assured that He will arrange the outcome according to His plan.

Does your hope appear lost today? Have you experienced some trial or discouragement that have left you with heartache or pain? Are you struggling with confusion or uncertainty, not knowing which way to turn or what will happen to you or your loved ones? If so, look to the empty tomb, be encouraged and find the assurance that everything is going to be all right. Our Saviour is alive and interceding on our behalf – so there is absolutely nothing in this world that should ever take away our joy and confidence in His perfect provision. Because of God's power and love, we should never despair.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
JONAH 4
PSALMS 116-117

THOUGHT

The tomb was not left open so that Christ could get out.

26 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:9-12

LESSON

The disciples' response

VERSE 11

*And their words
seemed to them as idle tales,
and they believed them not.*

There are a variety of expressions to convey surprise, and sometimes it isn't just the things we say but the things we do. We might begin arguing; we might try to test or go see for ourselves; we might simply disagree and refuse to believe. When the women returned to tell the disciples all that had transpired, the account seemed as idle tales. Most had responded with disbelief.

Yet rather than disbelieving, Peter ran to see for himself. John joined Peter in a race to the empty tomb. Despite everything that Jesus had taught them, all thought there was a natural explanation. Someone must have taken away His body. With all the supernatural things they had seen with Jesus, their first reaction was doubt and skepticism.

The resurrection of Jesus constitutes a solid rock on which Christians can take their stand for God's decisive self-revelation in Jesus. We may think we would have believed when someone told us about Jesus. But would we? How many times did it take before we believed in Jesus? Or are we still not sure about Him? Jesus says that we are blessed when we believe in Him without seeing Him. Jesus can take our small amount of faith and turn it into something great.

Is the fulfilment of Christ's promises in your life sufficient for you to trust in His promises for your future and your obedience to Him? How do you respond when you see God's promises being fulfilled? Let's be willing to take that small step of faith and help others to do the same.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH I
PSALM 118

THOUGHT

Our response to Jesus' resurrection should be repentance.

27 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:5

LESSON

Why do ye seek the living
among the dead?

VERSE 5

*And as they were afraid,
and bowed down their faces
to the earth, they said unto
them, Why seek ye the living
among the dead?*

It would seem strange to the women that the Angel asked them this question. They were not looking for the living. They were going to anoint a dead body, in a last gesture of loyalty and love. These were women very much in touch with reality. They were expecting what anybody would expect to find in a tomb: a dead body.

How many times do we seek life among dead things, among things that cannot give life, things that today exist and tomorrow are no longer? How many times do we shut ourselves in some form of egoism or self-complacency; allow ourselves to be seduced by earthly powers and by the things of this world; when we put our hopes in worldly vanities, in money, in success? Have you shut yourself in after a failure and no longer have the strength to pray? Have you lost hope and feel imprisoned by your sins? Then the Word of God says to you: "Why do ye seek the living among the dead?"

What is your experience with Jesus? We look for Him in church traditions. We look for Him in the stories we were taught in Sunday school. We seek to understand Jesus in the Scriptures. We are inspired by what He did for the early church. If this is the sum total of our experience with Jesus, then we are looking for Him among the dead. These are experiences in the past tense. Our call is not simply to honour the historical Jesus of the past. It is to live each day with the risen Christ of the present and the future. Jesus did not just die for us. He rose for us. So where do you find Jesus?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH 2
PSALM 119:1-16

THOUGHT

What man considered an end, God made it a beginning.

28 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 28:6

LESSON

He is not here,
He is risen

VERSE 6

*He is not here:
for He is risen, as He said.
Come, see the place
where the Lord lay.*

“If a man die, shall he live again?” asked Job [Job 14:14a]. There is no question more important than this. We who live in comfort and security seldom give any thought to death. Our minds are on other things. Yet there is nothing more certain than death. No one can escape it. Those who have lived before us are now gone. But Jesus changed all that. He broke the bonds of death.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” [1 Corinthians 15:55]. Our Lord’s resurrection is a fundamental theme of the gospel. Christianity rises or falls on the truthfulness of the fact that Jesus is raised from the dead. It is a vital part of the gospel message.

Jesus is alive and here today with the same power that has overcome sin, death and the grave and it is that power that can overcome doubt, fear and any hold that sin has upon us. Jesus is here to take the darkness of the cross and our graves and turn it into the beautiful colour of life and hope and possibility. We can experience the power of the resurrection by asking Jesus to not just be here with us but to be here in us.

Today let us ask the risen Christ Who is with us to change us, to heal us and to fill us with new life. Do not spend your life chasing earthly pleasures. Instead, live every moment of every day for Christ, because the Resurrection guarantees our work done for the Lord is not wasted.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH 3
PSALM 119:17-32

THOUGHT

Because He lives, we shall live also.

29 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 20:8-9

LESSON

John saw and believed

VERSE 8

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

Those who believe that the grave is man's final destiny, live without hope of a better world and are inclined to embrace that fatal approach – to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die”. The resurrection is the central foundation upon which the Christian faith is built. For some, the faith journey is quick. Others take it slowly. Most are somewhere between fast and slow. John saw and believed that Jesus was resurrected. No questions. No doubts. Just faith. Most faith journeys are not like John's. Most take a bit more time. It is not the pace of our faith that matters; it is the Object of our faith.

It is not enough to observe some of the facts about Jesus. It is not enough to behold the details about Jesus. We must see Jesus in the sense of perceiving or understanding the truth about what He has done for us and what He requires of us. We must come to the correct understanding of what we have observed and beheld. The greatest joy we can have is to encounter the living Christ and to know Him personally as our Saviour and Lord.

How do you see Jesus? What is your reaction when you consider the evidence of His resurrection? You say that you believe in Jesus and in the fact of His resurrection! Well, then how do you see the commands of Jesus? Do you simply view the Bible as merely a good book filled with good suggestions? Or have you gone a step farther and looked closely at the Word of God to see how it applies to your life? Hopefully, you will see and believe as John did.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH 4
PSALM 119:33-48

THOUGHT

On the cross, the world did all it could to Jesus. In the resurrection God did all He could to the world.

30 NOVEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 20:11-13

LESSON

Mary Magdalene

VERSE 13

*And they say unto her,
Woman, why weepest thou?
She saith unto them,
Because they have taken away
my Lord, and I know not
where they have laid Him.*

Different people come to know the Lord differently. For Mary Magdalene, it was an experiential testimony of the power of Jesus. She was once possessed by seven devils but Christ had delivered her [Mark 16:9]. Grateful to her Saviour and understanding His power, Mary Magdalene had followed her Lord faithfully since – even to the cross. Not only did she witness the crucifixion of Jesus, the gospels of Mark and John also named her as the first to see the resurrected Christ.

Yet note that she had wept when she saw the empty tomb. It did not occur to her that Jesus had resurrected. Perhaps she had not fully grasped the teaching of resurrection. Maybe she was too overtaken by grief over the unjust sufferings of her Lord to consider the possibility of a risen Christ. Facing the gaping sepulchre, she arrived at only one conclusion: someone must have taken the body of her Lord, and she did not know where it was.

The grief proved too tormenting for her that she burst out in tears in front of the two angels. She had seen the excruciating pain of her Lord on the cross and she couldn't do anything. Now she could not even do the least she could – she could not anoint the body of her Saviour.

It would be the greatest tragedy if Mary's conclusion was true. Satan would have won if Christ had died and even His body taken away by men. But Mary was wrong. Christ is risen. The dawn of salvation has pierced through the darkness of the world.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH 5
PSALM 119:49-64

ASSURANCE

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. – John 14:1-3

1 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON
Matthew 28:9-10

LESSON
Jesus appears
to the other woman

VERSE 9

And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.

How many women went to the sepulchre with the intention to anoint the body of Christ? The gospel of John focuses on Mary Magdalene. However, there was at least another woman according to the gospel of Matthew. She was none other than “the other Mary” – which, according to Matthew 27:56 should be the earthly mother of Jesus, the mother of James and Joses.

We read in today’s verses that both women were tasked to bring the good news of Christ’s resurrection to His disciples and as they were making their way there, Christ appeared before them. “All hail” were the only words He said to make them bow down before Him to worship Him. Christ then allayed their fears before instructing them further on what they should tell the disciples.

Notice that this “other Mary” was not given any special veneration even after the resurrection of Christ. If she were to hold an important position in the faith, Christ would have declared it when He first appeared to her, especially given the fact that the redemption work was done. But no, Jesus did not even address Mary personally. His beloved disciple John was then her son; he would take care of her [John 19:26-27]. Mary was a vessel for God’s use in the whole salvation plan but she was essentially a disciple and worshipper of our Lord and Saviour.

The same applies to us. We are but God’s channel of blessings to bring people to Christ. Woe to us if we should rob God of His glory.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH 6
PSALM 119:65-80

THOUGHT

He must increase, but I must decrease. – John 3:30

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 16:10-11

LESSON

Reaction of the disciples

VERSE 11

And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

What an anti-climax. The women had seen the risen Christ. Filled with awe and joy, we could imagine them hastening their steps as they rushed to tell the disciples the good news. The disciples should be elated! They might even jump around rejoicing! But no, as Mary Magdalene broke the great news in volcanic magnitude, she was met with the cool disinterest of the disciples.

What could have caused that reaction? It could be the finiteness of human mind. Many had thought that this was the end. The whole Christ experience was over – as dead as death itself. The possibility of resurrection escaped their grieving hearts, despite what Jesus had prophesied to them.

Yet there might be another reason. One that is more sinister. They could not believe that Christ, if He had really risen, would choose to appear first to Mary Magdalene. Gender discrimination might be the main stumbling block. Their pride would be another. Why would their Master give the honour of His first appearance to a woman who was once possessed by seven devils instead of His beloved Eleven? The disciples are after all Christ’s “inner circle” – men whom Jesus trusted and loved most.

The psyche of the disciples is in no way unfamiliar. It roots in our sinful tendency to always consider ourselves to be better than others. We also read in this passage a warning for serving Christians. To be committed in our ministries is one thing, but to presumptuously expect recognition and deserved honour especially in the eyes of fellow believers is quite another.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MICAH 7
PSALM 119:81-96

THOUGHT

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. – Romans 12:3

3 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 28:11-15

LESSON

Cover-up
by the priests

VERSE 13

*Saying, Say ye,
His disciples came by night,
and stole Him away
while we slept.*

Now that Christ is risen, the work of redemption is clearly revealed. All should come to this saving knowledge. This good news shall spread from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. All would believe and be saved. How good it is if this is to happen.

But no. For one, the religious leaders who have crucified Jesus is going to ensure that this does not happen. For it would not only mean their loss of respect among the people and of power over them, they would have to acknowledge that they were the ones who killed the Messiah.

As such, the chief priests and elders came together to work out a plan. They bribed the soldiers with a huge amount of money, telling them to lie that there was no resurrection; someone had stolen the body of Jesus instead. The soldiers on the other hand were also eager to collaborate with them, for it was a grave offence to lose the body which they were tasked to guard; the religious leaders had promised to help them by putting in a good word to the governor if they in exchange agreed to lie.

And thus the rumour that the body was stolen by men was maliciously weaved and spread. The propagators in their bid to protect themselves had laid the snare of unbelief. But all these are under the control of our sovereign God. His elect will hear His voice. The conviction of the Holy Spirit will see to the prevailing of the Truth in the hearts of God's children.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NAHUM I
PSALM 119:97-112

READ

Hebrews 10:15-25

4 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:13-16

LESSON

On the road to Emmaus

VERSE 15

*And it came to pass, that,
while they communed together
and reasoned,
Jesus Himself drew near,
and went with them.*

The gospel narrative now shifts to two men on their way out of Jerusalem, on a 12 km (7.5 miles) journey to the village of Emmaus. It was a long way by today's standard and they started talking about what had happened in the city. They were not exchanging information; they were discussing and reasoning how what had happened was even possible.

It was at this moment that Jesus drew near and went with them.

The Christian faith is a reasonable faith. It can withstand scrutiny of both the heart and mind. The salvation plan might not be clearly spelt out in the Old Testament, but with the sacrifice of Christ, all had become clear. The full revelation of God we have in our hands now is explained in a language we can understand, of how God has loved us. To redeem us from our fallen state once and for all, a perfect Sacrifice must be offered to pay the penalty of sin. For that, Christ came and died for us. His resurrection shows the victory against sin and death. Children of God will surely believe, and through this faith, they will be saved.

To believe, we need to be teachable. Ask God to illumine our hearts so that we can see the truth. The men did not start out believing. They reasoned and God drew near them. In fact, the two men did not even recognise Jesus in the beginning. But not for long – Christ will soon show them the way back to His Kingdom.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NAHUM 2
PSALM 119:113-128

THOUGHT

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. – Isaiah 1:18

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:17-26

LESSON

Slow of heart to believe

VERSE 25

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

The two men did not recognise our Lord even though He was walking closely beside them. Jesus noticed their sadness – an optimistic sign of a ready heart. They were at least not scoffers who were eager to prove the faith wrong; their sorrows showed that they had perhaps wished for Jesus to be triumphant, and that He is really the Messiah sent by God the Father.

Our Lord was patient with those two precious souls. Note that all three sentences made by our Lord in today's passage end with a question mark [v. 17, 19, 25-26]. Like a master guiding his students, our Lord used questions to lead those men to the Truth.

“Why are you sad?” and “What things?” allow the two men to convey how they feel and what they know. The first is directed to the heart and the second to the mind. We need to be sensitive to how our Lord has touched our lives as it is on this basis that we build our relationship with God. Experience in our walk with Christ and knowledge about the grace of our Saviour must go hand in hand. And when asked, we should be able to give a ready testimony.

Having attuned their heart and mind, our Lord then confronted those two men with almost a rebuke in verses 25-26, reviving them from their slowness in belief. Jesus will soon show them how the scriptures, both Old and New, come together to point to Him as the Saviour of all repentant sinners.

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. – 1 Peter 1:10-11

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NAHUM 3
PSALM 119:129-144

THOUGHT

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:27

LESSON
From Moses
to the prophets**VERSE 27**

*And beginning at Moses
and all the prophets,
He expounded unto them
in all the scriptures
the things concerning Himself.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HABAKKUK I
PSALM 119:145-160

THOUGHT

We often hear comments on how the Old Testament is not relevant to Christians, and that the New Testament is all that a Christian needs to read, especially when it comes to knowing our Lord Jesus. How wrong are these judgements! Luke 24:27 tells us that the teachings of Moses and the prophets are not to be rejected by Christians, for out of them Christ has instructed His two disciples (and us) concerning Himself. Again, we are reminded that all scripture, be it Old Testament or the New, is indeed inspired by God [2 Timothy 3:16].

And what a sermon this must have been! It was then clearly shown how the Old Testament prophecies that were related to our blessed Lord were all adduced, illustrated and applied to Him. We can imagine the moments of ‘eureka!’ in the minds of Christ’s disciples. Indeed, once they were blind but then they could see.

And how blessed it is to be taught by God Himself! Never would anyone grant illumination of such magnitude. The hearts of the disciples must have burned within them, while hearing such a sermon, from the ultimate Preacher and Teacher. The law and the prophets had all borne testimony to the Messiah.

We are almost irresistibly impelled to exclaim. Yet inside it may be natural for us to lament, what a pity this discourse has not been preserved. But of course this is according to God’s sovereign will. We will experience the same blessedness and even more when we see Christ face to face.

The phrase “all the scriptures” means that the Old Testament (as well as the New Testament which was then “work-in-progress”) points to the coming of Jesus the Messiah and the salvation He brings.

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:29-31

LESSON

Abide with us

VERSE 31

*And their eyes were opened,
and they knew Him; and He
vanished out of their sight.*

The two disciples had now reached Emmaus, the destination of their journey, but they could not bear to part company with the One Whose Word had opened to them a new and a bright world; and though He was evidently going on farther, they had constrained Him to abide with them, as it was towards evening and the day was far spent.

And He went in to tarry with them, though not for long. Sitting down to meat, the unrecognised Christ, without any apology, took the place of the host, and blessing the bread, He broke and gave to them. Was it the uplifted face that had thrown them back to the old, familiar days? Or did they read the nail-mark in His hand? We do not know; but in an instant the veil in which He had enfolded Himself was withdrawn, and they knew Him; it was the Lord Himself, the risen Jesus!

In a moment the hush of a great awe fell upon them, and before they had time to embrace Him Whom they had loved so passionately, indeed before their lips could even frame an exclamation of surprise, He had vanished; He “became invisible” to them, as it reads, passing out of their sight like a dissolving cloud.

On the words, “He vanished out of their sight”, Godet writes, “It must be remembered that Jesus, strictly speaking, was already no more with them [Luke 24:44], and that the miracle consisted rather in His appearing than in His disappearing.”

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HABAKKUK 2
PSALM 119:161-176

THOUGHT

Jesus can be right in front of you, walking with you and sitting down with you at every meal, yet your eyes can be restrained from seeing Him. We therefore should pray that God would open our eyes to see Jesus as He is, as being with us all the time.

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:32

LESSON

Heart burn

VERSE 32

*And they said one to another,
Did not our heart burn within
us, while He talked with us by
the way, and while He opened
to us the scriptures?*

When the two recovered from their experience with Christ, they had realised the state of blessedness they were in. There was no need to mention the name of the Messiah but instead, they had said to one another, “Was not our heart burning within us while He spoke to us in the way, while He opened to us the Scriptures?”

What caused the flame in their heart? It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, even their walk with the Son of God, who was once dead, and had risen and was alive for evermore.

God’s Word can have the same effect on our heart too, even when we do not know that it is Jesus Who is doing the work. Even when the two men did not know it was Jesus, even when they had not believed that He was risen from the dead, their heart still burned because of the ministry of God’s Word and of Jesus, the Living Word of God. Unlike man’s words and wisdom, God’s Word has that power.

Neither of them knew the other’s heart had burned until Jesus left. In the words of John Calvin, “For though the word of the Lord is always fire, yet a fiery rigor was at that time manifested in a peculiar and unusual manner in the discourse of Christ, and was intended to be an evident proof of His divine power; for it is He alone who baptises in the Holy Spirit and in fire.”

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HABAKKUK 3
PSALMS 120-121

THOUGHT

Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. – Jeremiah 20:9

9 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:33-35

LESSON

Christ appears
to the disciples and Peter

VERSE 34

*Saying,
The Lord is risen indeed,
and hath appeared to Simon.*

Returning to Jerusalem, the two men had gone direct to the well-known “hangout”, where they found the Apostles as well as others who had gathered for their evening meal. There they heard of another later appearance of our Lord Jesus to Simon, which must have occurred during their absence from the city. And they added to the growing wonder by telling of their adventure, of how Jesus had walked with them, and had made Himself known to them when they broke bread together.

This story tells us how those two men, when they received such great joy, had hastened to share it with others. It was a seven-mile journey back to Jerusalem, but they could not keep the good news to themselves. They could not suppress their joy. They wanted to share it with everyone.

The Christian message is never fully ours until we have shared it with someone else. And the two men were not alone in feeling the way they did. When they reached Jerusalem, they found others already sharing their experience. It is indeed glorious blessedness for a Christian to live in the fellowship of people who have had the same experience as he has had.

It has been said that true friendship begins only when we share a common memory and can say to one another, “Do you remember?” Each and every one of us is in this great fellowship of people who share a common experience and a common memory of our Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZEPHANIAH I
PSALMS 122-123

THOUGHT

Our Lord’s love for sinners was shown ultimately when He made one of His first appearances to the man who had denied Him. It is the glory of Jesus that He can give the penitent sinner back his self-respect.



10 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:36-43

LESSON

Christ appears
without Thomas

VERSE 39

*Behold My hands and My
feet, that it is I Myself:
handle Me, and see; for a
spirit hath not flesh and bones,
as ye see Me have.*

While the disciples discussed the subject of His appearances, Jesus Himself stood before them, passing through the door that was well-fastened, for the same fear that shut the door would securely lock it.

Our Lord's old-time greeting "Peace be to you" did not calm the unrest and agitation of the disciples' soul. The chill of a great fear fell upon them as they thought it was a spirit standing before them. To assure them, our Lord then extended His hands, drew back His robe from His feet, and as Apostle John said, uncovered His side, that they might see the wounds of the nails and the spear, and that by these visible, tangible proofs they might be convinced of the reality of His resurrected body.

And He asked them if they had any meat, and they gave Him a piece of broiled fish. He took and ate before them all; not that He needed the sustenance of earthly food in His resurrection life, but that by this simple act He might put another seal upon His true humanity.

By these actions, our gracious Lord had not only assured His disciples that He had truly resurrected, He had also presented the significance of His being risen. The very wounds which Jesus showed to His disciples, to convince them of His triumph over death by His resurrection, are the same marks which He everlastingly presents to His Father for them, in pleading the merits of His death, for their salvation, and for all who call on His name.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZEPHANIAH 2
PSALMS 124-125

THOUGHT

Remember Thee and all Thy pains
And all Thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
I will remember Thee.





11 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Luke 24:36

LESSON

Peace

VERSE 36

*And as they thus spake,
Jesus Himself
stood in the midst of them,
and saith unto them,
Peace be unto you.*

The eleven disciples and their friends were gathered together for counsel, probably hoping that something more would happen after what had already taken place — the women’s report of the repeated vision of angels, their own verification of the empty sepulchre, and above all, the testimony of Peter that he had seen the Lord. Into this anxious, waiting assembly the two “Emmaus” disciples entered with flaming hearts, declaring their own wondrous account of the resurrection of their Master.

Their dying hopes were reviving, their shattered dreams becoming a reality, their despondent hearts receiving a lift, and then, the sudden and surprise appearing of their Master behind shut doors pronouncing peace be unto them.

Peace be unto you. This was the ordinary Jewish greeting, but on this occasion, it was the Lord’s comforting greeting to His own. Here then was a most evident sign that He Whom they now see was none other but the same whom they had seen dead on the cross, and lain in the sepulchre. His first word intimated to them that He did not come to find fault with Peter for denying Him, and the rest for running away from Him. No, He came peaceably, to signify to them that He had forgiven them.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” [Hebrews 13:20-21].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZEPHANIAH 3
PSALMS 126-127

THOUGHT

To have peace of God, one must have peace with God (through our Lord Jesus Christ).





12 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 20:23

LESSON

Authority to
remit or retain sins

VERSE 23

*Whose soever sins ye remit,
they are remitted unto them;
and whose soever sins ye retain,
they are retained.*

It is worthy of remark here that the Lord Jesus confers the same power on all the apostles. He gives to **no one** any special authority. For who can forgive sins but God only, and the Son of man who had and exercised the power on earth to forgive sins [Mark 2:7, 10].

“The meaning of these words, I believe, may be paraphrased thus: ‘I confer on you the power of declaring and pronouncing authoritatively whose sins are forgiven, and whose sins are not forgiven. I bestow on you the office of pronouncing who are pardoned, and who are not, just as the Jewish high priest pronounced who were clean and who were unclean in cases of leprosy.’ I believe that nothing more than this authority to declare can be got out of the words, and I entirely repudiate and reject the strange notion maintained by some that our Lord meant to depute to the Apostles, or any others, the power of absolutely pardoning or not pardoning, absolving, or not absolving, any one’s soul.” (JC Ryle).

This has been the divine function of the Church and of the disciples of Christ ever since. It was not authority to forgive individuals, but to establish in biblical terms and conditions on which men might receive the assurance of forgiveness who would comply; and that those should not be forgiven, but that their sins should be retained who did not comply. In this aspect, they announce boldly the remission of sins on conditions of faith and repentance with a promise that God would confirm all that they taught.

Are my sins remitted or retained?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HAGGAI I
PSALMS 128-129

THOUGHT

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile – Psalm 32:1-2.



BIBLE LESSON

John 20:25-29

LESSON
Christ appears
to Thomas**VERSE 27**

*Then saith He to Thomas,
Reach hither thy finger,
and behold My hands;
and reach hither thy hand,
and thrust it into My side:
and be not faithless,
but believing.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
HAGGAI 2
PSALMS 130-131

THOUGHT

Thomas was not with the other disciples when our Lord Jesus came. What had happened to his Master on that shameful and cruel cross could have wrecked his hopes and shrank him into solitude. However, he had not broken away from his fellow disciples. He came to them and was bombarded with the thrills and excitement of the resurrection account. Notwithstanding, he could not accept their unanimous testimony; he must see and touch in order to believe!

Yet there was really nothing to complain about in the incredulity of Thomas. Who of them had believed Jesus as He deserved to be believed? Their dreams of individual glory and personal advancement had crowded out the glory of the resurrection. We must do them the justice to say that no tone of complaint against Thomas appears. They would be too conscious that with the beam so recently taken out of their own eye, they had no right to declaim against the mote in their brother's eye.

“Except I see ... I will by no means believe.” Can Thomas not ask for something which was given to the other disciples? Is he asking too much? A week elapsed, and the disciples were gathered again, Thomas this time with them. Jesus reappeared, just after the former fashion. In His infinite compassion and condescension, He addressed Thomas in a particular manner; accommodating Himself to the prejudices of an obstinate though sincere, disciple, yet gently rebuking his protestation.

Thomas' absence from the first meeting might have cost him dear, even the loss of his faith, but for Christ's mercy. We know not what we lose by absenting ourselves from the gathering of the saints.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

—1 John 4:15

14 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 20:29

LESSON

Not seen
and yet believed

VERSE 29

*Jesus saith unto him, Thomas,
because thou hast seen Me,
thou hast believed:
blessed are they that have not
seen, and yet have believed.*

Thomas shall have the precise evidence he craved for. The Lord Jesus had read his heart and sounded the depth of his complicated conflict between hope and fear, despair and love, and moreover intimating the fact that He had heard His disciple's protestations, as well as mercifully appreciated his genuine difficulties. Here was the divine opportunity for him, with more than one sense (see and touch), to assure himself of the reality of the resurrection.

However, the Lord Jesus pronounced the blessedness of not seeing and yet believing. He was not speaking of an impossible blessedness, or dangling the attractions of a dream before the eyes of His disciples. The unseen, and not the seen, is what strengthens faith. What men see is the very thing that makes them unbelievers, confusing them, perplexing them, utterly disabling them from laying hold on anything solid and comforting. If the seen hides the unseen, the visible becomes the enemy of the invisible, then there is dreadful misery.

All the apostles, and we as well, need to be taught a lesson. Jesus knows well that faith can never originate in things that can be seen, felt and handled. Such things may help faith, but can never produce it. The confession of Thomas "My Lord and my God", prompt and ardent as it seems, counts for little with Christ. Thomas had to be both lovingly helped and delicately rebuked for refusing the testimony of the other disciples [Romans 10:17].

So this blessedness belongs to us who live many centuries after Christ, Whom we believe seeing Him not. The object of our Christian faith is the unseen reality – God, the risen Christ, in the written Word of God!

THOUGHT

Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory – 1 Peter 1:8.

77

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH I
PSALM 132



15 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 20:30-31

LESSON

Believe to have life

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.*

Jesus, who was diminutively called Jesus, the son of Mary, the son of Joseph, the carpenter's son, Jesus of Nazareth, and of Galilee, was the Christ, or true Messiah; which signifies being anointed, and takes in all His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, to which He was anointed; and is an article of faith of the greatest importance; and is to be believed through the signs proving His resurrection, who, according to the Scriptures, was to rise again; and which, by the signs here recorded (John Gill).

Believers have our spiritual and eternal life through Christ, in union and communion with Him. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly, for He is our life of grace, of justification, of sanctification, and of glorification. The support and maintenance of our spiritual life and all the comforts of it, as well as our life of glory is through, or in His name. It lies in His Person; it comes to us through Him as the procuring cause of it; and for His sake bestowed upon us, yea, it is in His hands to give it, who does give it to all that believe.

John's purpose was not academic; it was not simply that people might believe intellectually that Jesus is the divine Messiah. It was rather that they might believe those foundational truths so that they could possess, experience and enjoy the life of God fully in, through, and from Christ alone [John 10:10]. This divine life affects the whole person, not just the intellect. Moreover it affects him or her forever, not just during that person's present lifetime.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 2
PSALMS 133-134

THOUGHT

O what true blessedness, the sacred fellowship with the Eternal Godhead, the sanctity of "the life" that is "light" – the everlasting life of the sons of God.





16 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 21:1-14

LESSON

Jesus appears
to the disciples in Galilee

VERSE 14

*This is now the third time that
Jesus showed Himself to His
disciples, after that He was
risen from the dead.*

In John 21:1-14, the Apostle John recounts the incident of Jesus' third appearance to His disciples. This time it is by the Sea of Tiberias (also known as Sea of Galilee, Sea of Chinnereth and Lake of Gennesaret). From various details in the narrative, we see that Jesus left no doubt in the minds of His disciples that He had truly, physically risen from the grave. For example, He looked just like any other human; and could see, speak, hear and eat like any normal person.

In earlier appearances to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and the eleven in the upper room, Jesus wanted to "open their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" [Luke 24:45]. The knowledge that the Master was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures [1 Corinthians 15:4] should lift their spirits and strengthen their faith. Here, Jesus uses the experience of their catching nothing initially to teach His beloved disciples yet another important lesson in faith. Their self-sufficiency is inadequate. They must depend upon the risen Lord from then on.

Today, as Christ's disciples, we no longer see Him bodily. But "we have a more sure word of prophecy" which is superior to the disciples' experience of physically walking with the Lord. We have the Bible, and if we "take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts" [2 Peter 1:19], we too can be of use to the Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 3
PSALM 135

THOUGHT

I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.
– John 15:5



BIBLE LESSON

John 21:5-7

LESSON

Any fish?

VERSE 6

*And He said unto them,
Cast the net on the right side
of the ship, and ye shall find.
They cast therefore, and now
they were not able to draw it
for the multitude of fishes.*

This is the second time the Lord used the act of catching fishes to demonstrate His omnipotence and omniscience to the disciples and to teach them a lesson in faith and obedience. The first account is recorded in Luke 5. In both cases, they brought in a great haul of fishes by simply following the Lord's instruction, when previously they had caught nothing. They immediately recognised that Jesus was the Christ because only God could know the exact location of the fishes and could practically command the fishes to rush into the nets as it were.

The lesson in both situations teaches the disciples and us as well, that in order to be "fishers of men", we must first learn to obey. John Gill, the famous theologian, believed that the ship was an emblem of the church in its present afflicted state; and the right side of it points to the elect, and where they are to be found in this world. The casting of the net signifies the preaching of the Gospel; and the promise of finding fish, the assurance Christ gives of the success of His Word.

As we heed the Lord's Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel, we must be prepared to go wherever He wants us to go; even if our own reasoning tells us those are not the ideal places. Countless missionaries, through the centuries, like Jim Elliot, William Carrey and Hudson Taylor, have bequeathed us with their inspiring testimonies and godly examples.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 4
PSALM 136

THOUGHT

The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but its sending capacity. – Mike Stachura, American missionary.

18 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 21:12-14

LESSON Come and dine

VERSE 12

*Jesus saith unto them,
Come and dine.
And none of the disciples
durst ask Him,
Who art Thou?
knowing that it was the Lord.*

What a beautiful picture of love and concern. Jesus, having met His disciples at their point of failure and revealing Himself as the awesome Lord of creation, now shares in their victory in a simple meal and fellowship, as He has no doubt done many times before. His followers approach Him in reverent silence. Knowing it is the Lord, they yet desire the assurance in His own words, yet still they do not dare to ask, “Who art Thou?”

Jesus has shown that His body is real. The disciples are now fully convinced that He is the Lord. He is the same Jesus who had walked and lived with them, the only difference being that He had risen from the dead in a perfect and glorified body. They know that death is conquered and that man could live forever. Such knowledge turns their sadness to joy, and despair to victory. And John wants to record this for us so “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” [John 20:31].

As we live out our lives in these perilous times, surrounded by evil and chaos, confusion and shame, let us pray for the Lord to use us to bring the Gospel to the lost, to be up and about the Father’s business and to occupy till He comes. For many of us, it is high time to awake out of our sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed [Romans 13:11].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 5
PSALM 137

THOUGHT

O Christian! Do not falter; the harvest field is white, and many souls are sinking into eternal night. – William E. Penn

BIBLE LESSON

John 21:15-23

LESSONJesus appears
to Peter**VERSE 19**

*This spake He,
signifying by what death
he should glorify God.
And when He had spoken this,
He saith unto him, Follow Me.*

Peter had boasted of his love and loyalty to his Lord. “I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death” was his promise [Luke 22:33]. Yet when the crisis came, he denied the Lord not once, but thrice. Nevertheless the Lord who knew his heart did not cast him off, but sought to restore His beloved disciple. But before He could do that, He had to teach him to truly understand the “first and great commandment” [Matthew 22:37-38].

Herein lies great lesson for the church and her ministers. Love is the basic essential for ministry. Without love, ministry counts for nothing in God’s eyes. A man may be the most gifted person in the world, but he is nothing and can do nothing of value in God’s eyes unless he first loves [1 Corinthians 13:1-3]. Abilities, talents, gifts, commitments, good deeds, and works do not qualify a man before God nor make a man acceptable to God. The one great thing – in fact the only thing – that makes a man acceptable and that qualifies to serve God is love.

And hence the Lord proceeded to transform His disciple. As Christians who desire to serve and please the Lord, we have to ask ourselves, do we love the Lord? If we do, then we have to keep His commandments, because Jesus has said in John 14:23, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.”

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 6
PSALM 138

THOUGHT

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. – 1 John 4:7-8

BIBLE LESSON

John 21:15

LESSONLovest thou Me
more than these?**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.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 7
PSALM 139

THOUGHT

Three times the Lord asked Peter, “Lovest thou Me?” These are actually three different questions. In the first question, our Lord asked Peter who he loved the most, the Lord Himself or “these things”. “These things” could mean the other disciples present; or the fish, the nets and the boat around them. Essentially, He meant everything and everyone in our earthly life.

In the second question, Jesus asked if Peter had loved with God’s love. Jesus used one word, *agape* in Greek, which is the highest form of love, the love of God Himself. Peter answered with a different Greek word *phileo*, which means brotherly love. In the final question, Jesus descended to the human level of love and used *phileo*. “Peter, do you really love, *phileo* me – even as a brother? And this questioning of Peter’s loyalty grieved him.

Jesus then assured Peter that his love would one day reach the ultimate height [vs. 18-19]. Peter would be called upon to demonstrate *agape* love, the sacrificial love of God. Peter would be called upon to die for Christ, to give his life preaching the love of God to those who do not care for it and will react violently against it.

Peter and the disciples did not yet understand this. But with the arrival of the Holy Spirit, this *agape* love is shed abroad in the heart of all who follow Christ. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Over the centuries, missionaries have taught us its meaning in practical terms. And we even sing about it in our churches.

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. – 1 John 3:18

21 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 21:17

LESSON Feed My lambs

VERSE 17

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep.

In today's verse, we see why our Lord is the wonderful Counsellor. Simon Peter must have felt keenly the guilt of having abandoned his Lord, for he had betrayed Jesus during His trials. Nevertheless, Jesus lovingly brought Peter back to His fold. Jesus knew that Peter loved Him deep down in his heart, and that is all that matters. Christians, do you love Jesus deep down in your hearts, too? If so, rejoice and be exceedingly glad!

Having restored Peter, Jesus gave him a task. The Lord has a special task for each of His redeemed ones; it keeps us focused on Him, instead of dwelling on our past failures. It may be a trivial task, yet regardless of the size or importance, let us heed our Lord when He calls us to do it. In this instance, Jesus told Peter, "(If you love Me), feed My sheep."

Jesus knows that in order for the church to grow and to spread to the uttermost part of the earth, it is important that His closest followers, His disciples, teach the new believers all that He had taught them. So, even though the task seems trivial, it is actually an important task for Peter, and, by inference, for the other apostles as well.

We, too, need to take heed, so as not to neglect the feeding of Christ's lambs. As we read God's Word, and walk close to Him, we ought to share our experiences with those who are younger in the faith, through formal and informal means.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 8
PSALM 140

MEDITATE

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.
– 1 Corinthians 11:1

22 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

John 21:20-23

LESSON
What shall
this man do?

VERSE 21
*Peter seeing him
saith to Jesus, Lord,
and what shall this man do?*

Having learnt in the previous few verses the manner in which he was to serve the Lord and die for Him, Peter asked of the Lord, “What shall this man (John) do?” Peter and John were two of the closest followers of Jesus, and obviously shared a strong and common love for each other. Peter wanted to know what fate lay ahead for his dear friend and comrade.

Jesus’ answer to Peter was: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? Keep on following Me.” Firstly, Jesus’ answer did not mean that John would not die. John himself corrected this in the next verse. Secondly, as we have read yesterday, Jesus has a purpose for every one of us. It is by God’s will that we are still alive today, and it is through His will also that we are to accomplish the purposes that He has for us in this life. Therefore, for some of us, like Peter, our lives will be an eventful one. But on the other hand, others will live the rest of their lives like John, quietly serving the Lord in a relatively uneventful way.

We should not therefore ask whether a brother should do this or do that for the Lord, but rather, ask ourselves, “What can I do for the Lord?” Perhaps it is not time yet for the brother’s purpose to be manifested, and therefore, it may seem that he is just tarrying till the Lord comes. Let us rejoice with our brother in our common salvation, regardless.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 9
PSALM 141

PRAYER

Lord, what can I do for You today?

23 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 28:16-20

LESSON

The Great Commission

VERSE 20a

*Teaching them to observe
all things whatsoever I have
commanded you.*

The theme of today's passage is the Great Commission, where Jesus commanded His followers to go to all nations to teach them His gospel, which is the good news that Christ has redeemed us through His suffering and death on the cross, and that He had conquered death when He rose again on the third day after His death. Christ is the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament [Luke 24:44], and He is the Messiah that had been spoken of in the Scriptures.

The Great Commission not only speaks of preaching and teaching all the peoples of the world; it also speaks of the repentance and the baptism of believers that follows. Not everyone that hears the gospel will believe, for some may doubt. But for those who repent, they shall be baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This will be followed by the teaching of the new believers to live in the way that Christ commanded His followers to live.

In obeying the Great Commission, Jesus' followers are not left to their own devices. Jesus had promised that He would be with us and will enable us to carry out the Great Commission successfully. As we have read in the previous two days, God's purpose for us may be different when accomplishing the Great Commission. Some of us will be preachers, pastors and missionaries, while the rest of us will continue our lives in uneventful, quiet obedience, and in doing so, we teach the world about Christ, through our lives.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 10
PSALM 142

MEDITATE

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. – 1 Peter 3:15

24 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 28:19

LESSON Make disciples

VERSE 19

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

In His pity for our sinful condition, God sent His only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. It is not His will that any should perish [2 Peter 3:9b], and therefore, it is in His will that all should come to repentance. It follows then that all should come to Christ for salvation. Having trusted in Christ for salvation, we should then obey Him and learn from Him through His Word, which is given to us in the form of the Bible.

In today's verse, Jesus commanded the disciples to, firstly, teach all nations everything that they have learnt during the time when they were with Jesus. Making disciples is the practical application of the Great Commission. Only by teaching new believers can the church of Jesus Christ grow and expand from Jerusalem, to Judaea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

The Great Commission, and therefore, the call to make disciples, is still on-going today, and shall be until the Lord returns. As God's children, we ought to heed the Great Commission, and make disciples of those who come into contact with us. Regardless of our station in life, whether we work in an office, or a home maker, we can share the teachings of Jesus from the Bible.

The Lord is good – tell it wherever you go,
The Lord is good – tell it that others may know;
Tell of His blessings and tell of His love,
Tell how He's coming from heaven above:
The Lord is good – tell it wherever you go!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 11
PSALM 143

PRAYER

Lord, lead me to someone who needs to learn of You today.

BIBLE LESSON

Mark 16:16

LESSON

Believe
and be baptised

VERSE 16

*He that believeth
and is baptised shall be saved;
but he that believeth not
shall be damned.*

Blessed Christmas. The true meaning of Christmas is that Christ came into this world to save sinners.

In today's reading, Mark gives a brief account of the resurrection of Christ from the Sabbath following the crucifixion. Mary Magdalene had told Jesus' disciples of the resurrection, but they did not believe her. Neither did they believe the two whom Jesus appeared to on the road to Emmaus. Jesus finally appeared before the eleven disciples and rebuked them for their lack of belief.

What follows is the Great Commission, and Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This is not to be misunderstood to mean that baptism saves. Baptism is merely an outward expression of a believer's faith when he puts his trust in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross for his sins. Baptism is an instruction from the Lord, and every believer should seek baptism in obedience to our Lord's command. The Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, for example, heard the gospel from Philip and immediately asked to be baptised.

The spirit of today's verse is therefore this: "believe and be baptised." This should be the response of every heart that has put its trust in the Lord Jesus. This can also be re-phrased as "believe and obey". Dear reader, have you believed and have you put your trust in the Lord Jesus? Have you obeyed all His commandments? If you have, rejoice and be exceedingly glad!

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

THOUGHT

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

– Romans 10:9

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 12
PSALM 144

26 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Matthew 28:20

LESSON

I am with you always

VERSE 20b

*... and, lo,
I am with you always,
even unto the end
of the world. Amen.*

These are the last few words of our Saviour in the Gospel of Matthew. They were spoken before He ascended into heaven. It was to be His final conversation with His disciples. Strangely it was not spoken as a sad farewell message with a tone of grief or loss, but rather one of comfort, of encouragement, and of victory. Christ has conquered death through His resurrection! And here was to be His last commission to His students in the world.

Earlier the Lord has claimed omnipotence and universal sovereignty by saying, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” [v. 18]. And by virtue of His kingly authority, He issued this last great command to His disciples: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” [v. 19]. Notice that these disciples have the assurance of Christ’s supreme authority to accomplish everything He asks them to do. He rules from the throne on high as the Mediator, providing and supplying whatever is needed to complete His purpose on earth.

As God’s redeemed, we too have every reason to go forth with much optimism and confidence. Moreover, our Saviour had promised us His presence as well when He said literally, “Lo, I am with you always.” May all these promises spur us to hasten our steps, increase our diligence, sustain our zeal to this great work. And although many obstacles and difficulties are anticipated, still with our Lord’s help, we will be able to finish our course with joy, and fulfil the ministry that we are called to be engaged in.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 13
PSALM 145

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your constant presence with me as I go about Your business in this wicked world. Amen!

27 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 1:8

LESSON

Be witnesses unto Me

VERSE 8a

*But ye shall receive power,
after that the Holy Ghost is
come upon you: and ye shall be
witnesses unto Me.*

Although the disciples had received the Spirit much earlier before, supposedly in some measure, yet now the Spirit would be poured forth upon them in a more plentiful manner. This outpouring of the Spirit would confer upon them the special gift of tongues, prophecies, and even miracles. Furthermore, the Spirit would render them fit to preach the gospel throughout all nations. They were to testify and bear witness unto the truth of what Christ did and said.

The word “witnesses” defines for Christ’s disciples their role and responsibilities. It gives them a sense of Christ’s plan in their propagation of the Gospel. Similarly, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Holy Spirit’s coming was to equip His disciples to carry out their work of witness. But how are we to be witnesses to the Lord? William Burkitt in his commentary has this suggestion: “By the purity of their doctrine, by the piety of their lives, and by their patience under suffering, both for Christ, and from Christ.”

Let us be reminded that witnessing involves not only a verbal communication of the Gospel; it speaks of actions as well. Actually it should comprehend the believer’s entire life. We are to be Christ’s witnesses in every aspect and area of our lives. Hence in our life, our relationships, habits, and goals we are to be a witness unto Him. It is not just a matter of telling; it is a matter of living. We are to be concerned to show that our faith is both relevant and related to every phase of a person’s life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ZECHARIAH 14
PSALM 146

PRAYER

Lord, empty me of self-confidence and let only Your Spirit fill me for Your holy service wherever You would send me. Amen!

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 1:8

LESSON
The spread
of the Gospel**VERSE 8b**

*... and ye shall be witnesses
unto Me both in Jerusalem,
and in all Judaea, and in
Samaria, and unto the
uttermost part of the earth.*

It is obvious that the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for every witness of Christ. In order for us to be able to bear our testimony unto Him with faithfulness and success, we need desperately the power and the influence of the Third Person of the Godhead. No one can be an effective witness without the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is true as we are to spread the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost world. The disciples would first begin their witness in Jerusalem, and would soon spread to Judea and Samaria, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Yet this world under the power of the devil will not appreciate the message of Christ but will do its utmost to reject it. The message that we are to bring is not about informing the world as to who we are or what we do. John the Baptist was a witness of the right kind. He came to bear witness of the Light and Jesus Christ is that Light. John was not attracting people to himself. He witnessed and spoke well of Christ.

Remember that our main message is not about the church but about Christ. We are not seeking to get people to accept our creeds, nor are we attempting to convince them of the superiority of Christianity. Our task is to point them to the Saviour Who alone can save to the uttermost all who will repent of their sins and put their faith in Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MALACHI I
PSALM 147

THOUGHT

Almighty God, I thank You for the power of the Holy Spirit and of the Gospel which You have committed to me to share. Amen!

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 1:9-11

LESSON
Ascension of Christ**VERSE 9**

*And when He had spoken
these things, while they beheld,
He was taken up;
and a cloud received Him
out of their sight.*

After our Lord had left instructions to the Apostles with some of the most important tasks on earth, He was seen lifted up into heaven. Jesus in His glorious and resurrected body left this earthly scene into the realm of heaven. He would occupy His exalted position on the throne at His Father's right hand. It is a seat of glory and honour for accomplishing His work on earth. The ascension would be a fitting and natural termination of our Lord's ministry.

The exact descriptions of Christ's ascension are necessary to show that He had actually gone to where He originally came from. If Christ had not ascended, He would not be inaugurated and installed in the glory where He now enjoys above. Furthermore, He could not have interceded for us here below. Had He not ascended into heaven, we could never have entered heaven ourselves. But now He has entered heaven as our Head and Representative.

And because Christ has ascended, the Holy Spirit has come to be enjoyed by us as individual as well as a Church. He comes as our Sanctifier, our Teacher and as our Comforter, just as our Lord had promised His disciples. He now begins the work where Christ has ended. Hence, we are not left as orphans to fend for ourselves, without direction and protection.

We are assured and confident that we too will be able to accomplish our mission on earth to the praise and glory of our risen Lord! For He who has called us will also empower us for the work of the propagation of the Gospel and we will complete the work through the divine help of the Spirit.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MALACHI 2
PSALM 148

PRAYER

Blessed Lord Jesus, I praise You that You are ever interceding for me at the right hand of the throne of grace. Amen!

30 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 1:10-11

LESSON

I will come again

VERSE 11

*Which also said,
Ye men of Galilee,
why stand ye gazing up
into heaven? this same Jesus,
which is taken up from you
into heaven, shall so come
in like manner as ye have
seen Him go into heaven.*

Here the disciples were looking steadfastly to Christ as He was taken up. They must be wondering when He would be back. Then the words of the attending angels to the disciples made it clear that Jesus Himself would one day return to the earth. It will be “this same Jesus” who is coming again. Twice in one verse Luke uses the word “same” to make it clear of His Second Coming. He will return the same way that He left the world.

Evidently the Lord Jesus Himself had promised His disciples many times before that He would return [Matthew 24:30, 25:31; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; John 14:3]. Although no man knows the exact hour when He will come back, His promise to them is enough to bring much comfort and assurance to their bleeding hearts. We too can cling to the promise of His return but we must be witnesses of Christ now.

As God’s children, we should be looking and longing for the Lord’s return. Doubtless, we are to be better prepared for His imminent coming. But the fact is, if we are only focused on His return, we would omit to do the Father’s business that He has entrusted to us. There are Christians so caught up with staring into the heavens watching for Christ’s return that they fail to accomplish what Jesus Himself has commanded them to do! Of course there are some people who are so earthly minded that they are of no heavenly use. There are also others who are so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MALACHI 3
PSALM 149

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help me to be better prepared for Your soon coming and to live each moment in holy expectation for it. Amen!

31 DECEMBER

BIBLE LESSON

Titus 2:11-14

LESSON

Looking for
that blessed hope

VERSE 13

*Looking for that blessed hope,
and the glorious appearing of
the great God and our Saviour
Jesus Christ.*

The great object which the writer now requires of his readers is to keep in view of the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The believers are to wait with ardent expectation and desire for this special event. This event will come to fruition and into a full consummation when our Lord Jesus Christ manifests Himself with divine pomp and majesty as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Christ's coming for His church to be with Him for eternity has been the hope of every believer. We are assured that this hope of the Lord's return is not just a mere hope, but the Blessed Hope. It is a special hope that will energise believers to holy service and will help us through the most trying times. Moreover, this hope allows us to aspire to be holy and godly, so that we are different from the people of the world. However, for one who lives without this Blessed Hope, even a believer can grow cold and worldly.

Our hope is laid up, not in this world but in the next. This is because this world, in its present state, is not capable of blessed happiness which the Christians hope for. The return of our Lord will be an amazing, joyful experience for the people of God, where we will forever be with the Lord. In this last day, He shall redeem all His servants from the power of the grave, and bring them to an everlasting enjoyment of His heavenly kingdom.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
MALACHI 4
PSALM 150

PRAYER

Blessed Lord Jesus, how I long to see You face to face. Amen!

