



A 15 Minute Plan

2 minutes praising the Lord

Praise songs, Reading a Psalm,
Listing the attributes of God

2 minutes thanking the Lord

Count Your Blessings!

2 minutes of confession and repentance

Sins we commit and Good Things we omit.

7 minutes of focused Bible study

- Read a verse three times.
- Explain the verse to yourself in your own words.
- Is there a promise for me in this verse?
- What does this verse teach me about God?
- What does this verse teach me about ME?
- Is there a command for me in this verse?

2 minutes praying for your family and friends

That's 15 minutes! Can you do more?

15 for 50 Devotions

Genesis to 2 Samuel by Jeff Holeman

Day 1

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

God is the creator of all! And that all includes you and me! He has created us for a purpose and that purpose is to glorify and enjoy Him! As we approach the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus we can also celebrate that our Creator makes no mistakes. He created you and me and loves it when we spend time with Him so that we can glorify and enjoy Him! Will you make a commitment to enjoy your Creator for as many days as you can for the next 50 days?

Day 2

Exodus 18:21

Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bride...

Leadership is so important. Early in scripture the principle of choosing women and men with godly character to lead our government is so important. We don't have to look far in today's political climate to see so much ugliness. However, our hope is not in politics but in a Savior who paid the price for us. Easter is a celebration of our TRUE HOPE. The Risen Jesus! Will you place all of your hope in Jesus today?

Day 3

Leviticus 9:8

So Aaron drew near to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself.

As we approach the celebration of Easter we remember the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. He was beaten, bloodied, and killed on our behalf. The sin offerings of the Old Testament were a preparation for the final complete offering of Jesus, the Lamb of God. The sacrificial death of Jesus was big enough to cover the sins of the whole world. It was personal enough to cover my sin. Thanks be to God for sending Jesus to die in my place. Will I live my life as a sacrifice for Him?

Day 4

Numbers 16:48

And he (Aaron) stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.

The disobedience of the people had resulted in the wrath of God coming against the people. Aaron knew that someone had to stand between the wrath of God and the people. Jesus drew the wrath of God against my disobedience on the cross. Easter is a celebration of freedom for the follower of Jesus. Jesus has given us hope against the plague of sin and death. Will I take the step of accepting the free gift of salvation?

Day 5

Deuteronomy 4:7

For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

Around the world we find our fellow brothers in sisters in Christ who suffer persecution because of their devotion to Christ. Easter is a reminder that our God is with all of His children during their times of suffering. Our Suffering Savior conquered death on the cross so that His followers could live in victory even during times of suffering. God is near to those who call upon Him! Will you call upon Him today? Will

you call upon Him to help those around the world who suffer persecution today?

Day 6

Joshua 1:5

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

God expects His followers to follow Him. The people of Israel are on the precipice of the Promised Land and God reminds them of His promise...I WILL BE WITH YOU. The cross is God's ultimate declaration of His presence with His people. NOTHING will separate us from the love of Christ because of the cross! Do you sense God's presence today? Just remember that God's promises are true regardless of your senses and feelings. He is with YOU today!

Day 7

Judges 3:31

After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad, and he also saved Israel.

Shamgar is one of my heroes of the Old Testament. Shamgar killed 600 people with an eight-foot-long stick!! He did all he could with all he had! Our world needs more heroes. No act was more heroic and meaningful than our Savior going to the cross in our place. He defeated death so that we could have life! Because of the death of Jesus we have an opportunity for abundant and eternal life! As we approach Easter, are you taking every opportunity to live the abundant life God has for you? You have all you need because of Jesus.

Day 8

Ruth 1:6

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food.

Good news travels far and fast. The good news for Naomi was that the Lord had visited his people in Judah and given them food. The good news for Oxford is that Jesus has been resurrected from the dead! Just as food satisfies the hunger of the belly the good news of Jesus satisfies the hunger of the soul. Who told you the Good News? Where did you hear about it? You have a story to tell. Share it with someone today!

Day 9

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Easter is a matter of the heart. As followers of Jesus prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus there are many who are simply celebrating a chocolate bunny holiday. The difference is the heart. So many are seeking satisfaction in happy feelings and fun traditions. These feel good to the senses but do not satisfy the heart. What about you? What are you more excited about this Easter season? A Rebel baseball sweep? A family get-together? Family photo in new clothes? All of those things are good things but how's your heart? 15 for 50 is a time to get your heart ready for Resurrection Day. Are you looking at things the way God does?

Kings to Proverbs by Don Gann

Day 10

1 Kings 8:27-30

"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

Solomon's prayer at the dedication showed his awareness of the greatness of God. And in God's greatness, Solomon saw his need for mercy and forgiveness. Nothing is more central to the Easter story than mercy and forgiveness. Turn to God today and find the wonderful promise of Easter.

Day 11

2 Kings 5:13

Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'"

Naaman had leprosy, desired healing, but then rebelled when Elisha told him to wash and be cleansed in the Jordan River. Naaman loaded his chariots to head back to his country angry but still with leprosy. Are you rebelling against something God is calling you to obey? Have you distanced yourself from God as a result? Easter invites us to return and find healing. Why not return to God today?

Day 12

1 Chronicles 16:8

Give thanks to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

King David is celebrating that he had become King. Through-

out his life, King David saw the good news of God's blessing on he and his kingdom. He called the people to make know God's deeds among the nations. As mighty as God's acts for David were, nothing surpasses the glorious good news of Easter. Proclaiming the message of Easter is the joy of God's church. As you prepare for Easter, perhaps part of your preparation is consideration of sharing Easter's truth with others.

Day 13

2 Chronicles 30:18-20

Although most of the many people who came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the LORD, who is good, pardon everyone who sets their heart on seeking God—the LORD, the God of their ancestors—even if they are not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary." And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

The people of God had been away from God for so long that the religious customs had been forgotten. King Hezekiah called the people back to God and prayed that God would pardon the hearts of the people, even though their ritual wasn't correct. Verse 20 says that God healed the people! Could it be that God is more interested in our turning to Him than He in our process? The cross of Easter reminds us that God has made our return to Him as simple for us as possible. Turn to God! That's it! No other trimmings necessary.

Day 14

Ezra 3:11

With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever."

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

The return of Israel from captivity was marked by hard work and celebration. It was also marked with worship. God is good and His love endures forever. The celebration of the rebuilding of the Temple was because it represented God's presence with them. Easter reminds us of God's goodness to all people and that His love for us is expressed clearly in the cross of Jesus. He desires to be with us forever.

Day 15

Nehemiah 6:8

I sent him this reply: "Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head."

We live in a difficult time of conspiracy theories and suspicion. So did the captives returning from Babylon to Jerusalem. While living in a world of confusion the church must speak the simple and life-changing truth of Easter. We speak it with integrity matching our actions with our words. And we speak the truth filled with love and grace in a world

where there is little. Like Nehemiah facing opposition, we tell the truth and stand on the Truth.

Day 16

Esther 4:14

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

Mordecai challenged Esther to realize that God may have placed her in the palace position to be an influence for God at that very moment. Don't underestimate the value God places on you and your knowledge of the Gospel. Have you thought about the fact that today might be God's day in your life to be in position to make a difference in the life of someone else? Easter stands as the greatest event in human history. The best thing you can do today may be to tell someone about what Easter means.

Day 17

Job 6:14

Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

As Job struggled through his predicament while his friends chastised him, he reminded them that rather than looking for all the reasons he might be suffering, perhaps they could just be kind to him. Jesus acted with ultimate kindness on the cross. He took our sins on Himself so that we can be forgiven. Could it be that rather than judging others, this Easter might be the best time to show kindness to people who are in their own predicament? The cross seems to say, "Yes!"

2 Kings 5:13

Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'"

Naaman had leprosy, desired healing, but then rebelled when Elisha told him to wash and be cleansed in the Jordan River. Naaman loaded his chariots to head back to his country angry but still with leprosy. Are you rebelling against something God is calling you to obey? Have you distanced yourself from God as a result? Easter invites us to return and find healing. Why not return to God today?

Day 18

Psalms 80:3

Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

Psalms 80 is a prayer for salvation. The prayer asks for resto-

ration and salvation for a nation. While we join in that prayer for our nation, Easter reminds us that God's salvation is personal. His restoration is through the work of Jesus. As we prepare for Easter, may our prayer be for all that God has for us this year.

Day 19

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Preparation for Easter includes giving focus to the One in whom we trust, the One on whom we lean, and the One to whom we submit. Jesus is worthy of our focus and the adjustment of our lives to Him. Spend some time today asking God to help you evaluate these things. When we do, the promise is clear direction from God for each day.

Ecclesiastes to Amos by Louis Zinc

Day 20

Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

*"Fruitful and acceptable worship begins before it begins."
– Alexander Maclaren*

Many pastors have said that attending worship on the Lord's Day is a decision that is made long before the Lord's Day. As you consider the purpose of the Lord's Day, would you prepare your heart to bring your life before Him as a living sacrifice eager to hear His Word and ready to do what you hear from His Word. He is risen! May your heart rise to meet with Him!

Day 21

Song of Solomon 2:8

The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes,
leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.

Song of Songs is a book widely known for its poetic emphasis on love between a husband and wife. When zooming in closely, it seems the poetry is singularly focused on that specific bride and groom relationship. However, when zooming out, the book has implications on Christ's love for His church. When we dwell on Philippians 2:5-8, we recognize that Christ leaped over mountains and bounded over hills

to come and redeem us. Therefore, we respond to His life, death, and resurrection with a heart that cries, Psalm 119:16 – "I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word."

Day 22

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!"

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

What consumes you? The answer to this question is found in what occupies your heart's throne and further evident in what you give your thoughts, time, and daily efforts to. Isaiah's vision of the glory of God transformed how he saw the Lord and also how he saw himself. Upon the confession of his sin, the guilt of his heart was removed, and Isaiah was consumed with going for the Lord's glory with his life. Have you had a glimpse of the resurrected Lord? Has that transformed your sinful heart into a servant's heart? Will you go for Him?

Day 23

Jeremiah 2:11b-13

But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Isaiah's willingness to go and be sent was based on his transformation from beholding the glory of God. Often times a person's reluctance to serve God is wrapped in mere excuses, while at the core of the reluctance is a heart that glories in broken "gods" that do not profit. Jeremiah records God's words as stating we have forsaken Him and the living

water He offers, and instead have chosen to serve the lesser things in our lives that actually hold no water and do not give life. The risen Jesus is alive and satisfies the thirsty in such a way that they no longer look to broken wells.

Day 24

Lamentations 3:21–24

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

Lamentations is a book of 5 poems (chapters) that reflect on the pain, suffering and anguish of Jerusalem being invaded and overtaken by Babylon. Personally, Lamentations teaches us to mourn over our own sin and seek the forgiveness and mercy that the Lord offers to those who humble themselves and seek Him. If there is anything we, as sinful people are experts at, it would be that we excel at being unfaithful to God. Yet, God’s faithfulness is not based on our fickle hearts. He is faithful because that’s who He is and His heart is full of mercy extended to those who humbly hope for Him and in Him. The resurrected King is our eternal and unchanging hope in earthly days that are changing evermore.

Day 25

Ezekiel 33:10–11

“And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

It is true that the justice of God’s holiness toward sin demands punishment. Yet is also true the heart of God’s love toward sinners is displayed in the punishment of His Son, Jesus in their specific place.

God’s heart of mercy prevents Him from finding pleasure in the death of sinners. When a sinner dies apart from Christ, the heart of God breaks and receives no pleasure. In fact, in Isaiah 28:21, Isaiah refers to God’s judgment as “his strange deed/work.” God delights to pardon those who understand their need for deliverance from their sins. Those who receive deliverance from their sins, delight in knowing that Jesus is the way one truly lives.

Day 26

Daniel 4:27–33

Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your in-

iquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

“A man who thought himself a god was made a beast to learn he was but a man.” – Unknown

Pride is a great danger that often seen by others yet unseen from within. Nebuchadnezzar was an incredible figure in Babylon who failed to recognize the mighty power of God because he was blinded by his pride.

Proverbs 3:34 says “Toward the scornful he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.” By His grace, God placed Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar’s life to warn him of his pride and show him how God gives favor to the humble. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar’s pride prevented him from listening.

Who by God’s grace is in your life right now in order to show you how God favors the humble? Are you willing to listen and recognize the power of the risen Jesus is greater than any power you think you have?

Day 27

Hosea 6:1–3

“Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.

After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea is one of the most vivid pictures of the adulterous heart of humanity in relation to God. The language used in Hosea depicts both the deep levels of unfaithfulness from God’s people and the depths of faithfulness and compassion that God has for His people, despite the way they reject Him.

God yearns for people to know Him in a personal relationship through His Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Hosea, God shows the adulterous woman, Gomer (who depicts us) that His mercy is far greater than her sin and that He will bring her back to Him at a great cost. Your redemption was not cheap, but came at a great cost. Therefore, your devotion to Jesus is not divided, but undivided.

Day 28

Joel 2:12–13

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

God is clear in His word what He desires from His people and why His people should desire to respond. In verse 12, God says that it is your heart He longs for and that with your heart genuine repentance can bring about transformation.

In verse 13, God shows you why you should rend your heart back to Him – for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He has proved His great love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Will you return to the risen Christ today? His heart is for you.

Day 29

Amos 5:21–24

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

There is a great difference between observance and obedience. The harsh words of God through his servant, Amos, show the severity of God's desire for a pure relationship with His people and their relationships with each other. God looks upon the heart and can discern when our heart is coldly observant but not warmly obedient.

As we look towards Easter, consider how Jesus did not simply observe our sin and wish to do something about it, but He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Obadiah and Jonah by Pam Carter

Day 30

Obadiah

Nobody is beyond God's discipline as is evident as you read through the one chapter that makes up the book of Obadiah, the shortest book in the Bible.

God loves us too much to let us destroy our lives with sin and as believers if we don't stay faithful to Him, we can expect his discipline. Our discipline, however, is not the end as it was for Edom. Obadiah shows us what it looks like for non-believers to be under God's discipline as well as believers to be under God's discipline, His love and protection and that He is in control of all things. As believers, we have the assurance through His death on the cross where He died for our sins and His resurrection and promise of return one day to make all things new. Our faith in Him should remind us to go to Him daily in prayer and study His word so we can honor Him with our obedience as well as ask His forgiveness and grace when we so often fail Him and to praise Him for His ultimate gift to us, His mercy and willingness to die on the cross for our sins.

Day 31

Jonah 2:6

"To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath me barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit."

Jonah's prayer from the belly of the fish shows us that there are no circumstances that can separate us from God. He wants a personal relationship with each and every one of us. Prayer is one of the most important parts of this relationship to Him. God's redeeming grace is for all people, no matter who or where they are.

God had a purpose for Jonah's time in the belly of the fish, to go thru a near death experience in order to teach him God is in control of all things and to bring him to repentance for his sin of disobedience and to rescue and save him. God has shown us all mercy as sinners by sending Jesus to be our Savior. As Jesus died on the cross, was buried and after three days rose from the grave, if we repent, turn from our sin and follow him, we have the assurance that we will live with him forever in Heaven and we should strive to live in obedience to Him and His plans for our lives to tell others about him here on earth.

Micah and Nahum by Dina Addy

Day 32

Micah 6:8

Mankind, He has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness and to walk humble with your God.

God's word is clear. He tells us what is good and how to live in a way that honors Him and points others to Him. But we can't live the kind of life without the power of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead that first Easter morning lives in us! He helps us to act justly toward others by doing what is right, to love mercy and faithfulness, and to walk humbly with our God every step of the way.

Nahum 1:7

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.

Our God is good! He loves us so much that He died on the cross and rose again so that when we place our faith and trust in Him, we can have hope in this world. God is our refuge, our stronghold in these times of trouble and He cares for us more than we can imagine.

Habakkuk and Zephaniah by Corie Miller

Day 33

Habakkuk

If you have ever looked around at the condition of society and wondered “What’s going on here, and God, where are you in all of this?” you are not alone. Habakkuk observed his generations’ waywardness, sin and suffering because of both and questioned his Lord “How long, O Lord will I call for help, and You will not hear?” (1:1). I can only imagine Jesus’ disciples were perplexed when he told them of His upcoming death and struggled to believe the account of the women as they reported that the tomb was empty. The Word is full of examples of believer’s confusion, but even in the midst of not understanding, a resolving to trust. In the midst of his confusion Habakkuk chooses watchfulness (2:1) and worship (3:17-19) Let the same be true for us. He is worthy.

Zephaniah

We as New Testament believers are accustomed to hearing about the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ. These are wonderful truths that bear repeating. The book of Zephaniah, in three short chapters speaks to something of equal importance: God’s judgment. God pours out His heart to His prophet, speaking of the coming judgment of Judah (chapter 1) and a greater judgment to come, when Christ comes to judge the world (Day of the Lord) 1:14-18. Do we forget sometimes that “being saved” means being saved from God as well as being saved for God’s purposes? As we prepare our hearts for Easter, let us think deeply about the wrath Jesus bore on our behalf. Let His sacrifice never be taken for granted. Let it never be forgotten that He bore the wrath that was meant for you and me. “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.” Romans 5:9

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi by Slater Murphy

Day 34

Haggai 2:6-7, 9b

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty”....‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

Do you feel as if your world is falling apart? Through His prophet, the Lord God states that the shaking He will perform includes the planets, the stars, the earth, and the nations, extending to the final cataclysm of the universe (Rev. 6-19). The Messiah will come, subjugate the nations, and set up His everlasting Kingdom. The Lord Jesus, the “desire of all nations” for whom we await with great anticipation, will come! He will manifest His glory (Ezekiel 40-42)!

Best of all, He will bring ultimate peace when He rules as the Prince of Peace upon the throne of David. Are you troubled? Look to the source of eternal peace, to the One who paid it all on Calvary’s cross, and place your faith in Him.

Let’s pray: Lord God, I cast all my cares upon You. You are my hope, my joy, and my peace. Please help me to center everything in my life on You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 35

Zechariah 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

This is one of the great Old Testament prophecies, fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey. The triumphal entry is celebrated worldwide by the Christian church on Palm Sunday. Although the crowds rejoiced on this day, soon after they cried out for His execution.

“Daughter Zion” portrays a people awaiting salvation, a land waiting for a king. When our Savior King returns for His church, there will be great rejoicing as He establishes peace by the authority of His reign.

This is a mind-blowing prophecy: the King of kings riding into Jerusalem on a young donkey?? Really?! They could not comprehend the Majesty of Heaven placed in the context of such lowliness. Jesus authority is without equal, but He is humble (Philippians 2:5-11).

Let us pray: Lord God, teach us to humble ourselves, trusting in your wisdom, so the light of Christ will shine through us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Malachi 3:1-3a

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

The Lord announces He will send His messenger to “prepare the way before Me.” This is a direct prophecy of the coming of John the Baptist 400 years later, who will fulfill Isaiah 40:3 as the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Then within the same verse, Malachi prophesies of the latter coming of Christ. He will come suddenly, with stunning effect. His unexpected coming, partially fulfilled at His first Advent, will be completed in full at His second coming.

As we draw closer to Easter, it would be timely for us to contemplate the holiness of God. He is at work in our lives, continuing His work of purification. The refiner's fire will burn off the dross of iniquity, and the launderer's soap will cleanse the stain of sin. Note that the Levitical priests were singled out because they led the nation astray. Because we are held to higher accountability, I'm thankful to serve alongside your staff ministers who possess such spiritual depth and impeccable personal integrity!

By the way, for all who love Handel's *Messiah*, these Malachi verses are key prophetic lyrics he set to music. As we ponder the atonement and the suffering Jesus endured for our sins, let us give thanks to the only One who is able to purify our hearts on a daily basis! Confessed sin results in forgiveness. Hallelujah!

Matthew and Mark by Whitney Simon

Day 36

Matthew 26:7

A woman came to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on His head as He was reclining at the table.

Mary must have understood that Jesus would soon face the cross, so as an act of worship, she anointed her Savior with her most valuable possession. Just as the fragrance of her perfume filled the air, so did this offer of adoration. Mary showed Jesus that He was worthy of such an extravagant act of worship and worthy of her complete devotion. Because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross on our behalf, He is worthy of our total praise, adoration, and worship as well.

Mark 5:27-28

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak, because she thought, "If I only touch His cloak, I will be healed."

This sick woman had suffered for many years with a physical illness. She truly believed that Jesus was her only hope for being healed. We too are sick with sin and our only hope of being renewed is through Jesus. As we look forward to Jesus' death and resurrection, we can have confidence of receiving forgiveness and healing through our great healer, Jesus Christ.

Luke and John by Jennifer Woodard

Day 37

Luke 15:10

"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Jesus knew the purpose of his life while on this earth. He

endured the cross with that purpose in mind. We must learn from Christ's example and discover the joy-filled purpose for our lives. The Lord rewards good works. There is joy in hearing him say, "Well done thy good and faithful servant." This means Jesus anticipated the joy that would take place when each person would repent and be saved. He also looked forward to the joy that would result from each good work done by believers in obedience to God and motivated by love. However, the God that brings us eternal life does not depend on us nor our works. It depends on our Jesus. Period. Christ paid the penalty for our sins, satisfied our God the Father's need for holy justice, and bought our places in heaven with his blood. Give Jesus the gift of joy. That is your purpose, and He is looking forward to it.

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus made some bold statements but claiming that his followers would never see death had to be close to the top of the list. Sometimes I think about Martha's response in Verse 27 when she said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." Martha was distraught over the death of her brother, Lazarus, and aggravated because she anticipated Jesus showing up sooner, God's timing is always right on time—not our time—but His time. She was a believer and knew in her heart that no matter the outcome, God would still be in control. In her mind, her brother would rise again in the resurrection at the last day. However, as we all learned from our childhood Sunday School teachers, Jesus had other plans that day in particular for Lazarus' life. It's hard to grasp. Other religions may promise eternal life, but no other religious leader did what Jesus Christ did: he arose from the dead. Jesus is God, and his promises are true. Someday each of us will die—and yet we will live, if we believe in Christ as Savior.

Acts to Thessalonians by Robert Allen

Day 38

Acts 17:1-3

When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said.

The GPS on our phones and cars has changed the way we navigate and find our way these days. Paul navigates through Old Testament scriptures for three Sabbaths to explain and give evidence that the Jesus he was proclaiming is the Christ prophesied. Paul did not use his own reasoning but Scripture to show that Jesus Christ alone had fulfilled the

prophecies. What role does the Bible play in navigating your beliefs that Jesus is the risen Christ prophesied thousands of years before?

Day 39

Romans 6:3-7

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Consider the various groups that we identify ourselves with each day: sports team, family name, religious group, citizenship, etc... All Christians are identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Paul is teaching that water baptism is the outward identification of an inward reality which is faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Consider the process of baptism by immersion and how it symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Have you been baptized as a result of your faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

I Corinthians 15:12-14

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

All or nothing – that is what the resurrection of Christ means to Christianity. Without the resurrection Christians have no Savior, no forgiveness of sin, no faith, no life, and no hope of anything different than this present world. Because Christ was raised from the dead we will be raised and dwell in His presence for eternity. With the resurrection of Christ being such a defining point, how does it impact your daily life in how you think and what you do?

Day 40

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

The good news of the gospel is that through Jesus Christ our sin broke relationship with God can be restored. God so

loved the world that He desired to reconcile sinners to Himself – to make them His children. This was done by Jesus going to the cross and paying the full penalty of our sins. Responding to Jesus in faith gives us His righteousness because we have none of our own. How has receiving the righteousness of Christ changed your actions, attitudes, and lifestyle in the past five years?

Day 41

Galatians 2:19-20

“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Keeping the law or doing the right thing cannot make us right with God. Only the death of Christ for our sins is acceptable to God. Christ died for us because He loves us and gave His life willingly. Who is more alive in your life, you or Christ? What changes need to come in order for Christ to become more alive in you?

Ephesians 5: 1-2

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

It is natural for children to imitate the actions and behaviors of their parents. Because God is love, we as His children are to walk in love. We are to imitate the love that Christ demonstrated on the cross – a love that gave. Biblical love is not an emotion or good feeling about someone but an action toward someone for their benefit. Identify a person in your circle of influence that needs to see this type of love and how you can demonstrate its truth.

Day 42

Philippians 2:5-8

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Attitude is everything and believers are to have the attitude of Christ. Even though Jesus was God, He humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death. He never asserted His rights as God or even a human being while He was mocked, beaten, spat upon and scourged. Paying the price for our salvation was His goal and not exalting Himself. Pride hinders our ability to see and meet the needs of others around us. A humble attitude positions us to be like Christ and serve those in need. Ask the Lord to show you where

pride hinders your ability to meet the needs of others.

Colossians 1:19-22

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

Have you ever been separated from someone for a time and then reconciled to enjoy the relationship again? Reconciling is a way to describe our salvation. We are separated from God by our sins and are reconciled to Him by faith in Jesus Christ. God desires a relationship with Him and He makes it available through Christ. What element of Easter reminds you that God desires and provides a way for you to be in perfect relationship with Him?

Day 43

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

In this great passage the Apostle Paul uses the word "sleep" to describe the death of believers and states that Jesus "died." One scholar said that death has been changed to sleep by the work of Christ. How does the death and resurrection of Christ comfort you in dealing with the death of a loved one?

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The death and resurrection of Jesus gives us reason to be secure in our salvation. There is no need to fear losing our salvation because of God's love, calling and transforming us to gain the glory of Christ. Believers are destined for glory

not judgment. What peace and responsibility does it bring in knowing that God sees you as eternally reflecting the glory of Christ?

1 Timothy to Philemon by Jack Schultz

Day 44

1 Timothy 1:13-14

"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

Paul had previously boasted in his standing as a Hebrew and a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5) but now calls himself "a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man," who received mercy despite his unbelief. Our stories as believers are not defined by either our moral prowess to earn God's forgiveness, nor by the depth and extravagance of our failure to out-sin God's mercy. Each of our stories is mainly about the grace of God being poured out abundantly. He gives more grace than we need and more grace than we could ever deserve. Celebrate your story and rest in his abundant grace today!

2 Timothy 2:13

"If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself."

This verse is one of the most remarkable truths of scripture and is often one of the most difficult for us to believe. In our human condition, it seems much more natural to us that when someone is unfaithful, we have the right to abandon our faithfulness to them. But God is faithful even when we fail, even when our faith is fragile, even when we choose the things of the world over him. He is faithful, because he must be true to himself, to his character, to his promise. His faithfulness is dependent on himself and Christ's work on the Cross, not on our faithfulness to him.

Day 45

Titus 2:11-14

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."

We often think of God's grace as the means of forgiveness and salvation, but forget about its long-term effects on our lives. His grace doesn't only save us, but sanctifies us. When we dwell on the grace purchased by Jesus' death on the

cross, we are enabled to reject other idols because we've experienced a love much better and more satisfying. Grace purifies us—making us more and more holy, motivating us to do what God deems good.

Philemon 1:8-9, 19

“Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love ... I, Paul, am writing this to you with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self.”

In this passage, Paul doesn't claim his own rights or throw his weight around as an authority figure. Instead, he appeals to Philemon on the basis of love, giving Philemon an opportunity to do what is right based on his own faith. Paul goes on to offer to cover Onesimus' debts himself, so that Onesimus, as a new believer, might be free from his past. When we are transformed by our faith, we give up our own rights in an effort to set others free.

James by JR Wilbanks

Day 46

James 1:19-21

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Through these tough times in history, we have seen much turmoil, bitterness, and a lack of control with our words. Social Media has given us a soap box to speak at any time and have no for regard our filters. Politics have arisen and caused us to see a divide in our country. Everywhere we look, there's so much pain and hurt.

In James though we find that Christ has called us to more. May we as Christians have a heart to listen. Empathy is such an essential piece of the heart of a Christian which allows us to understand someone's point of view. May we think before we speak. Many times, we voice our feelings rather than listening to the truths of Jesus Christ. May we also be slow to anger. In order to show a true heart of Jesus Christ, we need to show patience and not fall into the trap of lashing out against someone. May we take these three simple truths, and lift our eyes to Jesus who sacrificed His life so that we can inherit the Kingdom of Heaven and have a relationship with Him.

1 Peter by Alyssa Lee

Day 47

1 Peter 1:1-8

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

1 Peter 5:6-11

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter was written to bring hope and encouragement to suffering Christians of the first Century. Not only did bring confidence to the early followers of Jesus, but it also instructed believers in how to live their lives and walk in Holiness amidst their great persecution. While we are not being tortured by the tyrannical Nero simply for loving Jesus, we are faced with all types of things that have the potential to hinder our walk and discourage us. In the same way Peter instructed these early believers, he is also instructing us. As you read through 1 Peter, I want you to think about a few things:

1. God has graced us with a precious gift of Salvation.
2. His word is Truth and guides us through trials and valleys of our own (we will have them).
3. There is Joy in knowing that our suffering brings us closer to Christ.

Day 48

2 Peter by Sage McNamara

2 Peter 1:3-4

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

By Jesus' death He was glorified! By the promise of His death and resurrection on Easter being fulfilled we can look forward to other promises to come in our life. By believing in these promises and seeking to know Him more we are able to have a relationship with Him, and through our relationship with Him we can escape the sinful desires of this world.

1 John by Nicholas Dukes

1 John 2: 1-2

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world

We may be tempted to think that after His death and resurrection Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in a passive role waiting for the Father to tell Him when to act. On the contrary, these words show that Jesus is working, playing an active role in our sanctification! Let's be clear, the work of the cross is finished, and our sin has been paid for by His blood. We are called, as followers of Jesus, to repent from sin and turn back to God, but we do not do this alone. Because of Jesus's atoning sacrifice and resurrection, He now aids us in repentance as our advocate going with us before the Father.

"Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—even the truth itself. And we also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true."

As Christians, we are called to lead lives that point others to Christ, and we do so by living everyday surrendered to him. Jesus set the perfect example by coming to earth, living a sinless life, and ultimately giving His life so that we could live. As we look to Easter and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us, may we strive to make sacrifices every day for the glory of His Kingdom. Our actions, words, and daily decisions may be the only form of the gospel that people we encounter will ever experience, so we should always aim to have a testimony that others speak well of.

Day 49

2 John by Cassidy Porter

2 John 1: 5-6

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

God's command from the beginning was always to love one another. He reminded us to love others like he loves us. When God sent His son, Jesus, to die on the cross and pay the ultimate price we showed His unwavering love for us. As we continue living in unprecedented times it is easy to forget to love. However as we look forward to the celebration of Christ's victory over death we can remember His love for us and share that love with everyone around us!

3 John by Ansley Myers

3 John 1:11-12

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—even the truth itself. And we also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

As Christians, we are called to lead lives that point others to Christ, and we do so by living everyday surrendered to him. Jesus set the perfect example by coming to earth, living a sinless life, and ultimately giving His life so that we could live. As we look to Easter and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us, may we strive to make sacrifices everyday for the glory of His Kingdom. Our actions, words, and daily decisions may be the only form of the gospel that people we encounter will ever experience, so we should always aim to have a testimony that others speak well of.

Day 50

Jude by McKenzi Massey

Jude 20-21

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he proved forever that he keeps his promises and has true power over death. It is because of his love that he keeps his promises. In the book of Jude we are reminded that on this earth there will be evil, but we are to combat this by building ourselves up in faith and prayer. Today we get to live in God's power despite this

dark world because of his miraculous promise that if we are faithful to Him, we will have eternal life and a deep contentment in his love.

Revelation by Joanna Word

Rev. 21:3-4

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne, "Look! God's dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away."

It is not a coincidence that the things Jesus experienced during His life and resurrection on earth will be the things that we won't have to endure in eternity. Death turns to life, grief turns to joy, crying turns to dancing, and pain will turn to perfection. Let us glorify Jesus that He was willing to suffer and die for us so that we may be with and worship Him for eternity in Heaven.