

July 30th Readings

LEVITICUS 24:1-25:46

MARK 10:13-31

PSALM 44:9-26

PROVERBS 10:20-21

In Mark 10:17-22, the Bible gives the account of a rich young man who asked Jesus about how to get to Heaven. It's an interesting depiction of how what we've been blessed with on earth can become more important to us than our eternal future. He told Jesus that he had carefully kept the Mosaic Law all his life--and that was no easy task. Yet, Jesus knew his heart and saw that he held his possessions more dearly than he did pleasing God.

You know, we aren't that different from him. Humans just naturally cling to earthly stuff because it seems so real and important to us. Probably, all Christians should do some intense soul-searching daily and find what they may be clinging to, instead of trusting Jesus. The words in an old hymn called I Surrender All force me to ask myself, "Am I surrendering all to Him?" Consistent and intentional effort is required for that.

After all, nothing in this world is worth more than my devotion to Him and the promises He has made to me about the future of my soul!

July 31st Readings

LEVITICUS 25:47-27:13

MARK 10:32-52

PSALM 45:1-17

PROVERBS 10:22

Have you ever thought to yourself, "Man, if I had known what was coming, I would have acted differently in that situation. I'd have been prepared and would have made different decisions."?

It is interesting that in Mark 10:33-34 Jesus told his apostles point blank what to expect when they got to Jerusalem. He'd been alluding to it all through his ministry, but in this passage he lays it out clearly.

Obviously, they didn't process this information because they panicked when it came to pass. They didn't let Jesus' words of warning help them to be more faithful—instead, most ran away or watched from a distance, and one blatantly lied about even knowing the Lord.

The Bible tells us the world would always be afflicted with and struggle with evil; yet, just like with his apostles, we tend to be surprised (and often make bad decisions) when we have to face difficulties. Let us be prepared in

our hearts and minds for such things. How do we do that? By filling our hearts with His Word, making constant prayer a way of life, and trusting fully in Him.

August 1st Readings

LEVITICUS 27:14-34

NUMBERS 1:1-54

MARK 11:1-26

PSALM 46:1-11

PROVERBS 10:23

Psalm 46:1 gives Christians a wonderful promise—something we really need in this world where evil seems to be around every corner. The Bible tells us this comforting fact:

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

It is our task to seek that refuge and strength, to use it to help us in our lives. So often, we are overwhelmed by our troubles and try to go it alone. We forget that Almighty God has given us this assurance. It doesn't mean we will be spared trouble but that He will sustain us if we seek His help. The greatest enemy of faith is fear, so let us be ever trusting in Him and His sovereignty over all creation, so that we can claim His mighty promises!

August 2nd Readings

NUMBERS 2:1-3:51

MARK 11:27-12:17

PSALM 47:1-9

PROVERBS 10:24-25

An excellent observation by an old Biblical scholar is this:

“We would worry less if we praised more.

Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.”

So, I have to ask myself, “How often do I thank God? How often do I honor Him with gratitude for His many blessings? Do I even take notice of the things for which I should give praise?”

They are there, staring me in the face every day---do I take them for granted and never thank the One who gave them to me?

So, starting today, let's be more cognizant of our blessings and rejoice to God for them. This doesn't have to be a long, involved prayer--just a quick, heartfelt offering of thanksgiving for even the smallest of good things when we recognize them. The more you do this, the more aware you will become of how blessed you are and the more content you will be with your situation in life. In other words, the Bible urges us to express our appreciation to God because it is spiritually good for us, and more importantly—it pleases Him!

August 3rd Readings

NUMBERS 4:1-5:31

MARK 12:18-37

PSALM 48:1-14

PROVERBS 10:26

“What does God want from me?”

The Biblical answer to this question is a simple one. He wants our faith in Him. Faith is not only belief that He exists, but also it is awe and respect for who He is and what He can do. It is trust that He can and will do all that He says.

This is the clear answer, according to the Word of God. But, although the answer is simple, the “picture” of faith that the Bible paints for us is complex, and a person has to work out his faithful obedience to God throughout his lifetime. For instance:

He will shun sin and choose holiness. He will guard his heart, mind, and tongue against falsehood. He will be loving and kind, even to hateful people. He'll be generous with his money and his time for those who need his help. He will take joy in the salvation that has been given to him and be eager to share that good news with others.

Let us show our faith to the world every day by knowing the Bible and what it tells us about God's plan for a faithful life!

August 4th Readings

NUMBERS 6:1-7:89

MARK 12:38-13:13

PSALM 49:1-20

PROVERBS 10:27-28

There is an interesting sentence found in Psalm 49:7-9 that was absolutely true in the day it was written. “No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—so that they should live on forever and not see decay.”

At that time, there was no way for any human to be ransomed out of eternal death—but that was before Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, and sacrificed himself for the redemption of mankind.

Now, for those who believe in and follow Jesus Christ, that sentence from the Psalms is not true. And the ones who loved God and obeyed Him in the days before Christ are covered by his sacrifice, as well. Faithful believers are safe in his care, and one day, even the bodies we have occupied will be transformed into something new and heavenly. This is a blessing that is incomprehensible to us, but through faith we believe it is true. Is there anything more comforting than to know that you have well-being in Christ, for the present and for eternity?

August 5th Readings

NUMBERS 8:1-9:23

MARK 13:14-37

PSALM 50:1-23

PROVERBS 10:29-30

The Passover was one of the most important and influential events that God commanded the Jews to celebrate regularly. It reminded them of the hundreds of years of their slavery in Egypt. It reminded them of the amazing miracles God did to totally humble and bring down the Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods. And they were to especially keep in mind the final miracle when their obedience to God’s command gave them protection from death.

There is a definite parallel between the special occasion of the Passover and that of the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper reminds me of how I was enslaved to Satan before I came to Christ. It reminds me of the miracles Jesus performed to prove he was God’s Son, the unimaginable giving of his life for mine, and the final miracle when he overcame death and rose from the grave. It reminds me of how my faith and obedience to him gives me salvation from the threat of death and the promise of eternal life in Heaven.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in the Lord’s Supper every Sunday when God’s people assemble together. It is such a special thing, I do not want to neglect it—I want to remember it regularly when I come to worship him.