

## March 11th Readings

[JEREMIAH 16:16-18:23](#)

[1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-5:3](#)

[PSALM 81:1-16](#)

[PROVERBS 25:6-8](#)

How odd that today's selections go so well with each other. In Jeremiah 17:5-8 we are warned that we will be cursed if we trust in ourselves for safety or salvation. As so many believe today, if we can just educate people to understand each other and our differences, we can rid ourselves of prejudice and other social evils. This is a monumental task best left to God. Mankind cannot heal themselves.

In Psalm 11:11-13, God states plainly that the problem is that people choose not to listen to His voice – but choose to go their own way. This has never worked out well for us. We do not see the big picture like God does, and we tend to make all the wrong choices.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2, Paul reminds us that the solution is right in front of us. God sent his Son, left us with His Spirit and Word, and has shown us how we should live and treat each other. There is a solution, a plan, already in place. It is something better than we could ever think up.

## March 12th Readings

[JEREMIAH 19:1-21:14](#)

[1 THESSALONIANS 5:4-28](#)

[PSALM 82:1-8](#)

[PROVERBS 25:9-10](#)

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Love. Respect. Be at peace. Seek to do good. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks always. These are some of the commands given to us on how to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ. But along with these pleasant, happy commands, are also commands to admonish the

idle, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, and to be patient with them all! Those commands are a bit tougher! It is hard to be patient with someone we perceive to be lazy. Hard to be patient and encourage someone who does not seem to want your help, nor do they want to listen to you.

At times like these, I think how God must feel. He gave us clear-cut instructions on how to make our lives productive, abundant, and peaceful. But we don't trust Him. Or at least we don't listen to Him. We go our own way, we do what we want and we whine when things go bad. And yet, God loves us, and is very patient with us. As hard as it is, we need to be more like God. And when we love, respect, try to be at peace, try to encourage others, and try to be thankful in all circumstances, having patience with others becomes easier. Amazing! It's almost like God knew us and knew what we needed! Trust God. Love God. And above all, have patience. With others and yourself.

#### March 13th Readings

[JEREMIAH 22:1-23:20](#)

[2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-12](#)

[PSALM 83:1-18](#)

[PROVERBS 25:11-14](#)

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.*

*Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprovener to a listening ear.*

*Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him;  
he refreshes the soul of his masters.*

*Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give.*

Proverbs 25:11-14

The value of a word aptly spoken, a wise reprovener, a faithful messenger. Each of these provide great value to both the giver and receiver. Why, then, does the fourth verse flip that

around to a man who boasts of a gift he does not give?

As we watch those around us, we may become enchanted with the respect given to someone who seems to always say the right thing. We are humbled by the older person who wisely and discretely nudges an erring brother back into the light. We rejoice at the glad tidings of a brother in a foreign mission field who has been instrumental in translating our monetary gift into souls being saved. Sometimes, do we wish we were that person getting the accolades? Be careful not to say or promise that which you cannot or will not deliver. I think that is why the fourth verse is there: to remind us that as great as the first three are, they must come about organically. We cannot force them where they don't exist. Ananias and Sapphira would have done well to have heeded this verse. (Acts 5)

#### March 14th Readings

[JEREMIAH 23:21-25:38](#)

[2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-17](#)

[PSALM 84:1-12](#)

[PROVERBS 25:15](#)

*And then the lawless one will be revealed,  
whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth  
and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:8

In Genesis 1:3, God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. John, in the first chapter of his gospel, explains that Jesus is the Word. All things were made by this Word. Nothing came into being except by the Word.

There are a lot of fantastic details in the Bible. Some are hard to believe. This idea that Jesus is the son of God, and the Word, and Creator of everything, is one of those details. That Jesus was also the man who submitted to the Jewish and Roman leaders so that he would be the sacrifice for the sins of the world is another.

Here in the second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul says the breath of Jesus' mouth will kill the lawless one. It is hard to imagine how this can be. Faith helps resolve this issue. We don't have to understand all the details. Nor do we really need to understand much at all as long as we believe the promises that God makes. As long as we live our lives like we believe in His promises.

Saying, "I believe!" and living as if I don't is not the same thing.

#### March 15th Readings

[JEREMIAH 26:1-27:22](#)

[2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-18](#)

[PSALM 85:1-13](#)

[PROVERBS 25:16](#)

*As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.*

*If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter,  
take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him,  
that he may be ashamed.*

*Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:13-15

Do not grow weary in doing good. This almost sounds crazy. How could one grow weary when they are doing good things? When we look around and see evil and destruction, see how little positive effect our good has, then we understand. We grow frustrated. But, God reminds us to keep trying. We may not see the result of all we do, but God does. And He rewards!

Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. How do we reconcile that with the preceding sentence – to have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed?

We like to turn this around – if anyone doesn't follow the words of the Bible, we like to regard

him as an enemy, not as a brother. What about the brother or sister who seemingly has turned from God? Who has found themselves dragged back in to sin? Do we regard them as an enemy?

We know Jesus died for their sins. All of their sins – the ones before they became a Christian and the ones they commit after. We know forgiveness is possible and available. It can be difficult to reconcile God's commands. But, do not grow weary in doing good.

#### March 16th Readings

[JEREMIAH 28:1-29:32](#)

[1 TIMOTHY 1:1-20](#)

[PSALM 86:1-17](#)

[PROVERBS 25:17](#)

*Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house,  
lest he have his fill of you and hate you.*

Proverbs 25:17

Sometimes, a Proverb speaks a truth for a particular situation, not universally. I think this is one of those Proverbs. The idea set forth is that although we may like our neighbor, we generally prefer they stay neighbors, not become permanent house guests. I will not attempt to define the number of times in a week or year one can visit a neighbor before they step over this line. The number would vary greatly from situation to situation. What I will say is this: I must be attentive to the needs of those around me. I may not need their presence, but if they are hurting, or struggling, I may be the best available to ease their burden. Conversely, I may want to be around others, but for whatever reason my presence is not desired. Be aware of yourself and those around you.

March 17th Readings

JEREMIAH 30:1-31:26

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15

PSALM 87:1-7

PROVERBS 25:18-19

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*

1 Timothy 2:1-2

What! No protests, civil disobedience, or marches?! I find it interesting that Paul's solution to how we may lead a peaceful and quiet life is to pray to God. Not just praying, but

- Supplications. Asking for God's help and His sustaining power to combat evil and temptation.
- Intercessions. Asking God to intervene on behalf of mankind in general, and His obedient children specifically.
- Thanksgivings. Thanking God for all that He gives us. Our life, forgiveness, grace, mercy, food, shelter, family, friends, etc.

And that these prayers be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions.

This is not the way the world teaches us to get the freedom from threat we want, but it is what God teaches, even commands.