

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of October 1, 2017

**THEME: "Our Heavenly Calling"
HOME IN HEAVEN**

Sunday Read I Peter 1:3-13

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." All believers, those who have the blessed hope of eternal life by virtue of their faith in the resurrected Savior of the world, have a home in heaven. All unbelievers, because of their sin and refusal to accept the Savior of the world, sadly have a different destination where they will spend eternity, the place which God prepared for His enemy, the devil. The resurrection of Jesus separates Christianity from all the religions of the world, because the leader in whom Christians place their faith died for their sins and conquered death with a resurrection on the third day, thereby providing victory over death. He alone did that! His followers have a home in heaven, and they are the only ones that do. Old Testament saints who were faithful in following God's law that required the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb are considered some of Jesus' own in that those blood sacrifices looked forward to the death of their Messiah. Jesus is the risen and ascended Savior of the world who is returning to take His people home. That was the promise He made in John 14:3: *"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."* That is the blessed hope of believers: a home in heaven!

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

Monday Read I Corinthians 1:1-9

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." Quite often Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, began his letters to the churches by referencing believers as saints, as he did in this letter to the believers at the church at Corinth. That still holds true today for churches wherever they are, according to the truth of II Timothy 3:16: *"All scripture is given for our instruction in righteousness."* It is important to notice in our Bible reading for today that sainthood applies only to those who are *"in Christ Jesus."* That does not say in the church! Being in a church is a wonderful thing; to be part of a church family. For a person, however, to be considered a saint, he or she must be in the family of God! A person must have been born into God's family, what Jesus calls being born again in John 3:3-7. When a person receives Christ into his heart as his personal Savior, he or she becomes a saint in the family of God, according to the truth of John 1:12-13. And let us take note of that last thought in the verse above: *"With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."* Every place means Corinth and every other church around the world! People here in this church who have been born again by receiving Christ are saints according to God's word, not by a decision of the clergy, but by God!

NAMES IN HEAVEN

Tuesday Read Luke 10:17-20

"Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The Bible, in Revelation 20:15, speaks of an important book in heaven called the *"book of life: "And whosoever was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* Revelation 20 speaks of the final judgment of all people who have never personally received Jesus into their own hearts. Their destination is the lake of fire, that we are told by Jesus Himself in Matthew 25:41, was *"prepared for the devil."* The decision to receive Christ is called salvation because the blood of Jesus was shed to save people from the penalty for their sins. The apostle said this about the blood of Christ in I Peter 1:18-19: *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

In Revelation 13:8, we read of the "*Lamb's book of life.*" It was the blood of Jesus that satisfied God's holy law; it alone brings God's pardon. If you have accepted Jesus, your name is in that book: Rejoice!

CALLED TO BE SOLDIERS

Wednesday..... Read II Timothy 2:1-4

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." People who open their hearts to Jesus are inducted into God's army: soldiers of Jesus Christ. What does this tell us? It tells us that God is at war, and upon becoming a Christian, the believer has a spiritual enemy. That enemy is the same one who attacked Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. As we are told in Ephesians 6:12, this is not a war of flesh and blood, but a spiritual warfare with eternal implications: a war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, the arch-enemy of God. The weapons of warfare are not carnal, as mentioned in the description of the war in which we are engaged in II Corinthians 10:3-5: *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ."* Obviously, the battleground is our minds, the generator of our thoughts and decisions. The devil worked hard to infiltrate our educational system, that which our nation uses to feed the minds of our youth. The devil, unfortunately, has succeeded in taking God's truth out of public education and inserted fabrications to keep students away from God's truth. Yes, their teaching of the human body in biology is still a teaching of God's creation, but not in a way that gives God the glory, the same is true of the teaching of space in physics, another creation of God. Christians are at war against the deceptions of the devil propagated by those who have rejected God.

ARMED WITH TRUTH

Thursday Read Ephesians 6:10-18

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." How essential it is for Christians to put on the armor of God daily as they go out into the world! How do we don the armor of God to defend the faith and attempt to free those being held hostage by the devil with his weapons of deception and doubt? We equip ourselves with truths of God's Word. It is our power of defense and also the sword of the Spirit which pierces the minds of those who hear it. We are told this about Biblical truth in Hebrews 4:12: *"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* The Bible does not inflict injury to the body, but it does penetrate the minds of people and has the possibility of affecting their thoughts, and maybe direct them to a knowledge of God and possibly belief in Jesus as the Savior of the world. A knowledge of the Bible is for believers a shield of defense against the falsehoods of the devil being spread by those blinded to God's truth, and it is a sword to penetrate the minds of unbelievers in attempt to free them from being held hostage and captive forever.

GUARANTEED VICTORY

Friday Read I Corinthians 15:57-58

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The great thing about Christianity in this spiritual warfare is the guarantee of victory by our faith in God and His Word. The apostle John in I John 5:4 repeated this assurance of victory mentioned here by Paul with this truth: *"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."* A wonderful thing about the Bible is that it has never had to be revised or brought up to date. It has never had to be corrected because of new discoveries. The truths God gave to Moses about proper behavior are true today for a life of fulfillment. The Bible reveals the origin of things and the future. Its prophetic truths are history written before it happened, much of which has already been fulfilled in amazing detail; and a great deal is being fulfilled now in our lifetime as reported almost daily in the news. What does all of this mean? It means that the only victorious life for time and eternity is a life of faith in God. All of us should give the same testimony as the psalmist expressed in Psalm 119:105: *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* That guarantees victory!

CALLED TO BE SOWERS

Saturday Read I Corinthians 3:5-9

"I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." Christians are called to be saints; they are called to be soldiers, and they are called to be sowers of seeds. This is the meaning of some parables of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew where He likens portions of Scripture as spiritual seeds to be planted in the hearts and minds of people. Sharing God's truth is planting seeds into the lives of others with the hope of bringing forth fruit. Convincing people is God's job done through the Holy Spirit, not ours. But the Spirit can't work until we plant the seeds of God's Word. We are not to debate; we are to plant the seeds!