

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of October 8, 2017

**THEME: "Our Heavenly Citizenship"
A HOLY NATION**

Sunday Read I Peter 2:5-12

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation: His own special people; that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Imagine that! To have God call us *"His special people!"* That is what Jesus made possible by His willingness to go to the cross on our behalf to pay the penalty of our sins with His precious blood! Oh, what a Savior! To think that our faith in Him allows our Heavenly Father to see us as a holy nation, not a political one on the map, but a spiritual one all over the map. Along with believers throughout our nation and around the world, we are the ones to *"proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* Just as God's people should be the most loyal citizens of the nation where He has seen fit to place us, we should be all of that and more to the holy nation of believers in our generation in God's family! Our holiness is possible only because we have been purified by the blood of Jesus which, by faith, cleanses from all sin; and we are empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit by whom we were born into the family of God. We can live holy lives only insofar as we yield to the Holy Spirit within us, and not quench or grieve Him. Let us forever etch in our minds the commands in I Thessalonians 5:19 and Ephesians 4:30-32: *"Quench not the Spirit...Grieve not the Spirit of God...Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."*

RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE

Monday Read II Corinthians 5:17-21

"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." Just try to imagine what Jesus did for us so His Heavenly Father could grant us a Divine pardon that frees us from an eternity in hell, the ultimate penalty of our sins. Jesus became flesh and died the death of a sinner although He was sinless. He did that out of His love for us. It was the plan of our loving God. What earthly father would do what God did? That is an indescribable love! Let us never forget: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."* Because the perfect, spotless, sinless Son of God became sin for us, we can be declared righteous by our holy God. By our faith in Christ as Savior, we have a clean slate! We are free from the penalty of sin, the bondage of sin, the guilt of sin, and the power of sin in so far as we yield to the Holy Spirit. That qualifies us to be ambassadors for the kingdom of heaven and soldiers in the army of Christ to fight the good fight of faith for the glory of God during our time on His planet earth! The good tidings of great joy that the angels brought to the shepherds on the hillside outside Bethlehem is now in our hands to share with the people in our lives. The ministry of reconciliation is now our responsibility. People need the Lord so they can have eternal life!

A SEPARATED PEOPLE

Tuesday Read II Corinthians 6:14-17

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." God's people are compelled both to come out of the world and go into the world at the same time. That may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. Christians are instructed in today's reading to be separate from the world so as not be caught in its deceptions and delusions. At the same time we are to be witnesses for our Savior in the world to share the gospel and give opportunity for people to be freed from the darkness of the world. Coming out of the world is to separate from the darkness that is in the world and live in the light of Scriptures to penetrate the darkness of the world. We are in this dark world to bring people into the light of God's truth. Light shines in the darkness so people can find their way. The light must be separate from the

darkness so people have a way to escape the darkness. Our Savior's command in Matthew 5:16 is urgent: *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

ACCESS TO GOD'S THRONE

Wednesday..... Read Hebrews 4:12-16

"Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may be able to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need." Being citizens of the kingdom of heaven brings with it some invaluable rights and important responsibilities. Perhaps the greatest privilege of all is access to God's throne. For the most part, all people believe in prayer, particularly in times of emergency. The question is whether or not God hears those prayers. It is eye opening to see the truth of Proverbs 28:9: *"He that turns his ear away from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."* Think of that: the prayers of those who disregard Scriptures, God's holy law, are an abomination to God! God eagerly hears the prayers of the repentant sinner and is delighted when those who have satisfied the requirements of His law approach His throne in prayer. We have the assurance of God's joy in hearing our prayers in Proverbs 15:8: *"The prayer of the upright is His delight."* Because of our faith in Christ as Savior, we can come boldly to God's throne in heaven and approach Him, as instructed by Jesus in Matthew 6:9, as *"Our Father who art in heaven."*

ETERNAL INVESTMENTS

Thursday Read Matthew 6:19-21

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Imagine being able to make investments in heaven, an account that is on the books that God keeps there! It is one thing to have what we call a financial security blanket for our time on earth, particularly in what people call a "nest egg" for retirement. But what about post-retirement, when our years of retirement are over, and we leave planet earth? One may ask: how do you invest into eternity? Jesus addressed that very point in today's Bible reading in a text detailing what Jesus said about our money management. He compared investments we make in earthly pursuits to those we make in heaven. He emphasized that we stand the risk of losing earthly investments: that is not so with those we make for the work of God here on earth in building the church. It is worthy of note, however, the teaching in II Corinthians 9:7: *"Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver."* Cheerful giving gains eternal reward.

HOLY LIVING

Friday Read I Peter 1:13-16

"Be ye holy, for I am holy." A vital responsibility of the believer is to live a holy life that is pleasing to God. We must consider that, by our faith in Christ, we have taken on the family name: Christian, the name of Christ. That brings with it a major responsibility: living up to the family name! That can be done only in the power of the Holy Spirit. The world has many allurements that would cause a compromise of holiness if a person were to indulge. Doing so would compromise the standards of God. This makes it vital to acquaint ourselves with God's expectations as revealed in His Word, so we can form our convictions on what will and will not please God. Many attitudes and behaviors are in the black and white of Scriptures, but there are those things that are not specifically addressed, leaving room for differences among believers. In such cases, each believer should look for the Spirit's guidance in forming personal convictions, the instruction in Romans 14:5: *"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."* Christians must allow for these differences without being judgmental of those who differ. We are warned, however, not to be stumbling blocks to other believers, particularly those new to the faith! Let us show love one for the other!

FLEE, FOLLOW, FIGHT

Saturday Read I Timothy 6:11-14

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." The instruction given to Timothy is for all believers! These three commands are a good description of the Christian life: flee, follow, fight! This is especially appropriate when we consider that we are in spiritual war against the devil and the rulers

of the darkness of this world. There are times when it is good to flee; there are times when it is good to stand our ground and fight, defending God's truth, and we are always to follow the instructions of God's Word without compromise! To make the proper decisions on when to flee and when to fight, we must totally rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us in the application of Scriptures to our daily lives! If He advises to stand our ground and speak out, we must. If He advises to lay off, so we should! Always we should follow Him!