

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of January 20, 2019

THEME: "Divine Assignments"

CHOSEN BY GOD

Sunday Read Ephesians 1:2-12

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." To be among those chosen by God is by far the highest calling in life: predestined to be part of the family of God even before God created the heavens and earth and all that is therein. There are those who believe that this predestination means that individual people have no choice; that is an erroneous belief. The Bible teaches that every human has a choice as to whether they want to receive God's gift of eternal life in such places as Joshua 24:15 and the words of the Savior in Revelation 3:20: *"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve...Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in."* Being omniscient, our God knows beforehand how people will choose, but all people have the freedom to choose whether or not they will accept Jesus as personal Savior or ignore that wonderful gift offered by God that had been paid for the blood of Christ on the cross of Calvary. We all have foreknowledge in the sense that we can predict from our experiences how people will choose between two options, but we can be wrong! God knows for certain how people will choose. Because of His perfect foreknowledge, God was able to list all the people who would accept Jesus as Savior and those who will yet accept Christ before the creation, a truth stated again in Revelation 13:8 describing a scene from the coming Tribulation period: *"All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."* All evangelism is the work of God to have His people bring the gospel to those whose circumstances are controlled by God to bring them to the place where they will hear the message by a Spirit-led Christian advising them how to become a child of God. Accepting Christ is to be one of the chosen!

CALLED BY NAME

Monday Read John 10:1-5

"The sheep hear His voice; and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." God knows our names. If God were to walk into a worship service in a church, He would not have to be introduced to anyone; He knows the names of all, and He know all about each one of us. He knows every person who, by virtue of their decision to accept Jesus as Savior, are in His family, a member of His household. I love the truth of Isaiah 43:1-5 which emphasizes that same personal attention that God gives to His children, whom Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calls His sheep. We read these words of the prophet about God's feelings toward those who have placed their trust in Him: *"I have called thee by name, you are mine...Since you are precious to me, thou hast been honorable to men, and I have loved thee; therefore I will give people to care for thy life."* God is Father to all those who have received Christ as Savior, or as Jesus put it, those who have been *"born again"* into the eternal family of God. Our physical birth gave us an earthly family; our spiritual birth, a heavenly family!

BODY OF CHRIST

Tuesday Read Ephesians 1:22-23

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head of all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." One of the Biblical metaphors for all believers is the Body of Christ. Metaphors give us an illustration enabling us to comprehend a spiritual truth. Christians are called sheep as mentioned in yesterday's reading showing how we follow the shepherd and are under His care. As part of the *"Body of Christ,"* we learn that we must work together as one unit in which each part of the body has a special function. Obviously, all parts are important so as not to have a handicapped body where other parts pick for the part not working. Some parts are less visible, but not less important; as a matter of fact, the unseen parts of the body of Christ may be more important just as in our physical bodies. We need those parts working in the inner parts or the outer parts are useless. The whole nervous system, the circulatory system function while hidden by the outer skin, but the body is dead if they are not working. And the key for everything is to be attached to the head which houses the brain. Well, Jesus is the Head of the Church, so every part is dependent upon Him, and is in constant communication with

Him. That means prayer and Bible reading are vital. Those who stay isolated need to understand that they are part of a body and must be attached to perform effectively. The body is one with many parts working together: the church!

LOVE

Wednesday Read I Corinthians 13:1-7

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." Love is fundamental to the Christian faith, and to the Christian life. God is love, first and foremost! God tells us in today's Bible reading that without love, we are nothing! Without love, everything we do is of no eternal value. What about all those things we do for the church? What about all we give in tithes and offerings? What about our prayers? Without love, they are nothing. God is love! God makes it obvious that He wants His people to show love in this world. He is talking about divine love, not physical love or brotherly love. They have their place, and rightfully so; but there is a higher love, the love of God which believers have in them by the presence of the Holy Spirit upon their spiritual birth when they received Christ as personal Savior. Physical love and brotherly love are part of the human experience for all people; divine love is possible only for true Christians living in the Spirit! That is the love that honors God and is a key to being the light of our world commanded by Jesus in His teaching in Matthew 5:14-16, where He told us that we should *"Let our light so shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven."* Those good works must be motivated by love!

HUMILITY

Thursday Philippians 2:5-8

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." To be an effective Christian, humility is paramount! We are of no eternal value in and of ourselves. We are of value only when we humble ourselves and allow the power of God take control of our lives. The best example of humility is our Savior. Just leaving heaven to come to earth was humbling. Then to come not in the glory of a King, which He is; but as a baby in a manger in a barn, the most humble surroundings of any baby ever. In earthly terms, He was homeless. Actually, His home was in heaven, and He was on an earthly mission; but as an adult, He had no personal residence on earth. Christians can best show the love of God and the power of God when they humble themselves and allow the power of the Holy Spirit take control of their lives. Our most effective sharing of truth is not engaging in debate to prove a point, but in simply sharing a witness for what God has done in our lives, and sharing His truth and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the listener. By making nothing of ourselves and allowing Christ to be everything allows God to make us all things to fit His plans.

SECURE ANCHOR

Friday Read Hebrews 6:18-20

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." What a Savior we have! He conquered the ultimate enemy of man: death itself! He is the anchor of our soul, equal to any and every problem anyone has to face. As the anchor of our soul, He provides safety and security from any threats to our joy and peace. There is nothing too hard for Him! It is our soul that is the seat of our emotions. It is the soul that has to try to withstand the storms of life! It is the soul that is subject to panic when the trials come. It is the soul that is looking for answers when there seem to be no answers. It is the soul that has to bear the brunt of attacks from those who spew hate. Where does one turn when the soul is severely challenged? It is the soul that needs an anchor. The believer can turn to Christ. It is His Word that tells us that He will make a way for us in I Corinthians 10:13: *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above that which yo are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you will be able to bear it."* Our faith is secure in Him!

BLESSED HOPE

Saturday Read Titus 2:11-15

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." The ultimate hope of the believer is the blessed hope of being with our Savior and Lord in person. It is when our faith becomes sight! This is the moment to which Christians can look forward: to be with our Savior! That will happen. Those who die in Christ, according to II Corinthians 5:8, leave the body and are *"present with the Lord."* But that which the apostle refers to as the blessed hope is that moment when both the Christians who have died and those still alive go to meet the Lord in the air when He appears to take them to heaven and to be with Him forever. It is the catching away described in I Thessalonians 4:16: *"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the sound of the trumpet, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."* What a day!