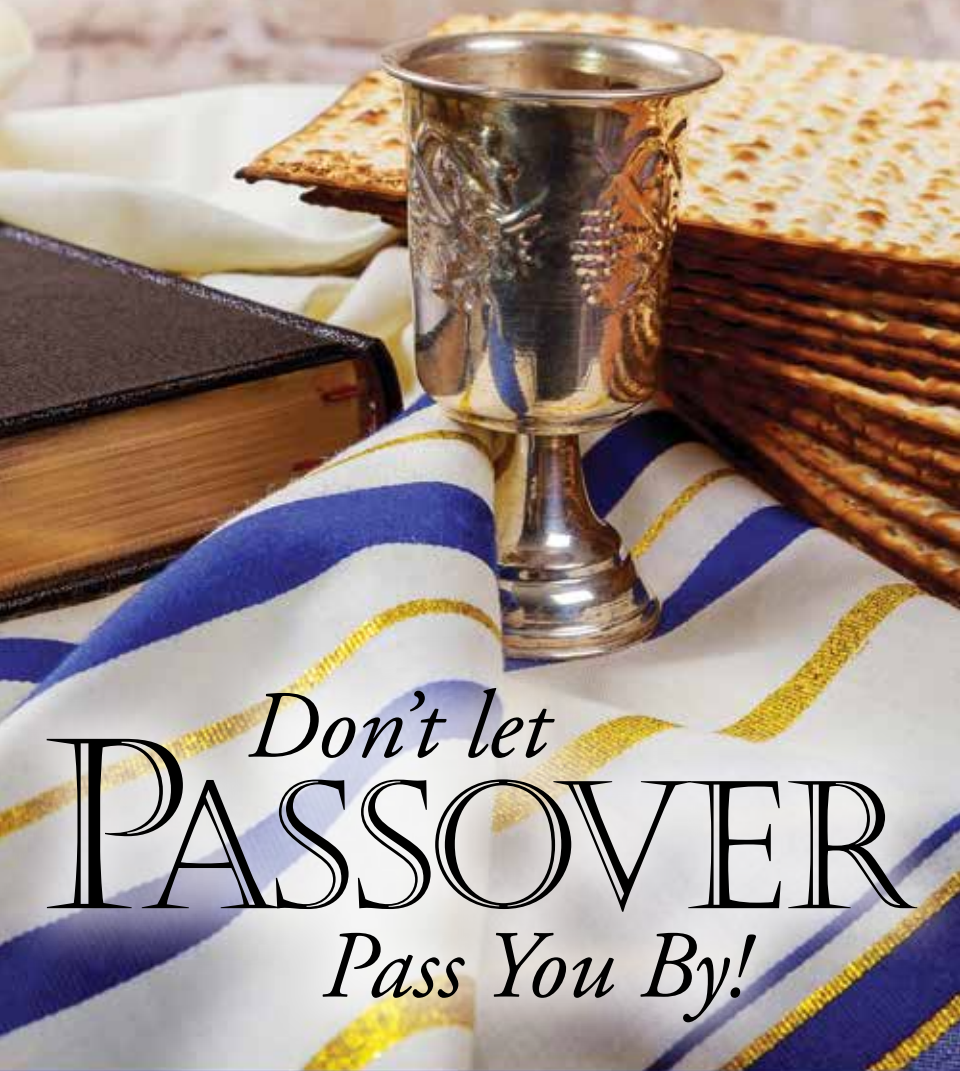


INSPIRATION

Blessed to Be a Blessing

APRIL 2019



Don't let
PASSOVER
Pass You By!

YOUR ROAD TO
RESTORATION

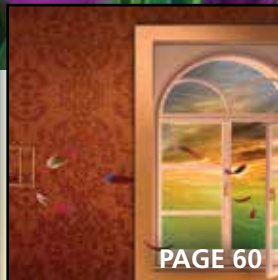
PAGE 12

GETTING PAST
DAISY-PETAL FAITH

PAGE 18

ESCAPING THE HOUSE
OF BONDAGE

PAGE 60



Our Theme Is

DON'T LET PASSOVER PASS YOU BY!

Do you need a breakthrough in some area of your life? On **page 5**, David Cerullo shares the spiritual significance of Passover and why this “appointed time” can be your special season of extraordinary blessings. You also won’t want to miss the powerful THANK YOU GIFTS we will send you this month in appreciation for your faithful partnership (**page 32**).



Your Road to Restoration

Barbara Cerullo’s article on **page 12** shares how you can defeat the “joy thief” and restore hope and victory to every area of your life.

15 'One Miracle After Another!'

Drowning in debt, Jamie was facing a situation that looked hopeless. But after taking a bold step of faith, he received an amazing breakthrough in his finances and family.

16 Why the Women Rested by **Claude Alexander**

Do you know how to rest in the Lord? Rest is the best way to declare that you're trusting Him to resurrect even the "dead" things in your life.

18 Getting Past Daisy-Petal Faith by **Jim Buchan**

Ready to be showered with God's grace and kindness? Then believe what He says in His eternal love letter to you.

21 Your April Devotionals

A daily guide to living in the covenant promises of God.

53 Surrounded by Favor by **Perry Stone**

No matter what kind of difficulties you may be facing today, God wants to change your perspective through His life-changing favor.

58 'We Canceled Our Suicide Plans!'

Overwhelmed by the pressures of life and disappointed with their Hindu gods, Moses and Sarah decided to commit suicide. But Jesus surprisingly intervened through a Christian TV broadcast.

60 Escaping the House of Bondage by **Ben Cerullo**

As you remember Jesus' cross and resurrection this month, God wants His love to break through in your life. Open your heart wide to Him!

Can You Spare \$50 This Month?



If you had an extra \$50 to spend, what would you do with it? Take your family out for dinner? Go to the movies? Buy a few extra groceries and put gas in your car?

While all of these may be worthy options, consider this...

Using social media and other cutting-edge technology, Inspiration Ministries is now able to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to over 600 people for every \$50 we invest in soul-winning!

Even better...

We've found that a \$50 investment in evangelism will result in more than 100 people praying to make Jesus their Lord and Savior!

Thanks to your partnership, another soul is born again into God's Kingdom *every 20 seconds or less* through our evangelistic outreaches. Last year your support powered worldwide outreaches that led over TWO MILLION people to Christ!

You can indicate your decision to become a MONTHLY Inspiration Ministries Partner on the enclosed response form, by visiting inspiration.org/souls, or by calling one of the numbers below:

US / Canada:

+1 877-578-7979

UK / International:

+ 44 (0) 80 0043 8420

Australia:

1800 057 938

Together, we're touching lives for eternity!



STRENGTHEN
your walk
with David Cerullo

Don't let
PASSOVER
Pass You By!

This special season is God's "appointed time" for your breakthrough.

It's often puzzling when some people receive a breakthrough from God, while others don't. Our Heavenly Father loves *all* His children, so why would some seem to miss out on His blessings?

One answer can be found in Luke 18:35-43, the story of how a blind man (identified in Mark 10 as Bartimaeus) received his sight. One day while begging beside the road, he heard a great commotion and asked someone nearby what was happening.

"Jesus of Nazareth is passing by," he was told (Luke 18:37).

You see, Jesus was prepared to *keep walking* unless Bartimaeus took some step of faith to apprehend Him.

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" he cried out (v. 38). People told him to be quiet, but the blind man *"cried out all the more"* (v. 39).

Finally, Jesus *"stood still"* and asked, *"What do you want Me to do for you?"* (vs. 40-41).

Friend, perhaps you find yourself in a similar position today. Jesus is passing by, and you need to get His attention. And when He stops to stand before you, you need to tell Him the pressing need that is weighing on your heart.

Bartimaeus wanted to receive his sight, of course. But what miracle do **YOU** need from the Lord today?

Don't let Him pass you by!

A SPECIAL SEASON OF BLESSINGS

This month we celebrate the Feast of Passover, one of three times each year when God offers to bless us with extraordinary breakthroughs. Along with the feasts of Pentecost and Tabernacles, Passover is described in Exodus 23 and Leviticus 23 as one of God's "*appointed times*" to do special miracles for His people. One of the conditions is that we're *commanded* to bring Him a special gift during these times, for God tells us not to come empty-handed (Deuteronomy 16:16).

But the Passover season will soon be over, and God doesn't want you to miss it. It's as if Jesus is passing by, but you must take a step of faith to receive your miracle.

The Feast of Passover was instituted when God led His people out of slavery in Egypt to begin their journey to the Promised Land, "*a land flowing with milk and honey*" (Exodus 13:3-5).

What an amazing turnaround!
From slavery to freedom.
From poverty to prosperity.
From the land of "Never Enough" to the land of "More Than Enough"!

Just as God supernaturally intervened to bless the children of Israel during Passover, He wants to stretch out His mighty hand to

bring *you* into His land of abundance as you honor Him during the Feast of Passover this month.

Whatever turnaround you need in your life – be it healing, deliverance, protection, a financial breakthrough, or a restored relationship – your season of blessings will be unleashed when you honor God and celebrate the Feast of Passover as He asked.

AN EVERLASTING ORDINANCE

Perhaps you're saying, "But David, you don't realize how difficult my circumstances are or how long I've been waiting for my breakthrough."

Yet consider this, my friend: For *430 years*, the Israelites were held as slaves in Egypt. That's a long, long time of waiting to be set free! Before they could possess their Promised Land, they had to break free from the enemy who was holding them captive.

Their breakthrough came on a night called Passover...and it changed their lives forever.

On that fateful night, the Death Angel visited Egypt, killing the firstborn of every family whose door post wasn't sprinkled with the blood of a spotless lamb, as God had commanded. Only the Israelites, the Lord's chosen people, were spared. They were "passed over" by the angel of death.

Passover is the oldest continuously observed feast in existence today, celebrated for 3,500 years. That shouldn't be a surprise, for God said this *"appointed time"* was to be celebrated FOREVER: *"throughout your generations"* as *"an everlasting ordinance"* (Exodus 12:14).

Why do you suppose Passover is so special to God that He wants us to celebrate it forever? The answer is amazingly simple: Passover is a prophetic picture of God's only Son, Jesus Christ, who would one day come into the world to give His life on a cross to forgive your sins and mine. He came as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"* (John 1:29).

So the wonderful truth is that God's "Passover Gift" to us is His Son Jesus, who sets us free from our bondage and enables us to receive His covenant blessings. ALL of God's favor is found in Jesus, and He wants to give you the breakthrough you need today.

Don't let Him pass you by!

SPECIAL PASSOVER BLESSINGS

In Exodus 23, God promises specific Passover Blessings to you if you will obey Him, celebrate Passover, and come before Him with a special Passover offering. He will send an angel before you to guard you...be

an enemy to your enemies...bless you with provision...remove sickness from you...prevent barrenness and miscarriages...give you a long life...and make you fruitful. And that is just the *beginning*.

As you come before the Lord with your Passover offering, exercise your faith to believe that *God will release His special Passover blessings in your life!* Your celebration of the Lord's *"appointed times"* creates a cycle of giving and receiving – a cycle of seedtime and harvest that releases an unfailing rhythm of His supernatural blessings.

Whether you need a turnaround in your health, finances, emotions, or relationships, NOW is God's designated time to come to your aid. He still promises that if you obey Him, He will protect you, guide you, provide for you, heal you, and keep you safe!

So take a step of faith and obedience today. Come before God to honor Him with your worship. Prepare Him a special offering. And then trust that your season of incredible miracles and blessings is at hand!

God has made an appointment to meet with you...to speak to you...and to bless you with amazing turnarounds!

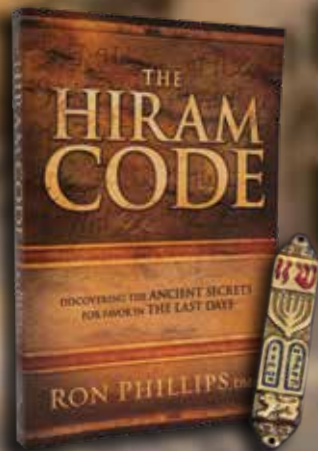
Instead of allowing Him to pass you by this Passover season, make sure to obey Him, bring Him your

special offering, and experience a new dimension of covenant living!

God Bless You,

David

P.S. In appreciation of your partnership to impact people for Christ around the world, I will send you some powerful THANK YOU GIFTS to help you activate God's covenant promises this month (see **page 32**). I'm convinced your obedience to honor God during this appointed season of Passover will unlock extraordinary blessings in every area of your life.



Your Authority in Christ

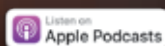
STRENGTHEN
your walk
with David Cerullo



My friend Dr. Mike Smalley is our guest teacher for this inspiring new series
beginning April 11



You Tube



To sign up for my daily discipleship videos, visit **StrengthenYourWalk.org**.

Make Tax Time Less Painful

(next year)



A free call to the Inspiration Ministries Partner Relations team can help you find deductions to take on your 2019 income taxes and save on estate taxes when you go to be with the Lord!

Did you know...

Many people pay thousands of dollars in *unnecessary* income or estate taxes – all because they neglected to plan ahead.

Did you know...

A gift from your retirement plan to Inspiration Ministries could entitle your estate to a 100% deduction. From a tax perspective, your retirement plan is an excellent, cost-effective asset to bequeath for evangelism and discipleship.

Did you know...

As this grateful partner discovered, there's "tremendous peace of mind" in having your financial affairs in order through a properly planned Will, trust, or beneficiary designation:

"The Inspiration Ministries Partner Relations Team helped me lay a strong foundation for my estate, giving me tremendous peace of mind!"

– AMANEE, Illinois

To find out more about how you can save money on taxes even as you win more souls through Inspiration Ministries, contact our Partner Relations Team TODAY!

US: 1-855-702-7042
plannedgiving.inspiration.org





Passover Breakthroughs

Do you need God to do something *extraordinary* in your life? What He did for these other Inspiration Partners during this special season, He can surely do for you!

Have you ever wondered...

What's the significance of the Feast of Passover? Should Christians celebrate this and the other "appointed times" God prescribed? Are extraordinary breakthroughs possible during this unique season on God's calendar?

Some of our Inspiration Partners had similar questions about the feasts described in Exodus 23 and Leviticus 23, but God spoke to their hearts through teachings on the feasts featured via our various outreaches. Look what happened when they took a step of faith to sow a special Passover seed in gratitude for God's goodness:

RESCUED FROM GRIEF...

"When my husband died, I thought my life was over. He had been my strength and encouragement, and after his death there were many days when I didn't care if I lived or died. But after I discovered your ministry and was taught about Passover a few years ago, I felt alive again! I became a monthly giver and felt like I was supernaturally walking on water like Peter. Slowly but wonderfully, God has come to my family's rescue, doing a great work in me and my daughters. We are now following Him more than ever before." – JOYCE, Pennsylvania

ENORMOUS BLESSINGS...

“Ever since you taught me about the three ‘appointed time’ feasts and sowing uncommon seeds, I have seen enormous blessings! God is so faithful, and He has used your ministry to bring endless miracles into my life. Because of what I have learned from you about God’s covenant promises, my husband and I have been living in amazing abundance the past few years. When it didn’t seem humanly possible for us to make it, God’s miraculous hand touched our lives!” – CHRISTINA, Washington

GOD HAS SEEN ME THROUGH...

“Last Passover, I happened to listen to David Cerullo and a guest minister discuss the Feast of Passover. I decided to make a \$250 offering, and within a week God multiplied back what I had sown. No matter what the times have looked like, God has always seen me through. I’ve discovered there is truth behind the seed faith teaching!” – WILBERT, Virginia

A NEW JOB...

“During the Passover season, we sowed a seed into your ministry and asked your prayer ministers to pray for my husband’s job search. Then God blessed him with a wonderful job! Thank you so much for praying for us in the time of our need.” – S.P., Kuwait

DEBT FREE...

“I have always given my tithes and offerings to the Lord, but things changed when I began to give during the Jewish festivals. God answered my prayer and allowed me to pay off all my bills, making me debt-free! In addition, although I had only asked Him to let me buy a home of my own, instead He enabled me to buy an entire apartment building, large enough for me and other family members. Thank you for teaching me about God’s blessings during these vital appointed times.” – CRYSTAL, Virginia

Join us as we celebrate the Feast of Passover this month.

You can visit inspiration.org/souls to sow *your* special Passover offering today!



YOUR ROAD TO RESTORATION



Barbara Cerullo

Hello dear friend.

I simply love this time of year! Just as it's a new season in the weather, I sense that God *also* wants to bring you into a new “spring-time” season in your spiritual life.

So...are you ready to cast off any remnants of the chilly “winter” season you’ve gone through? Are you ready for the Lord’s resurrection power to give you a new beginning of hope and fruitfulness?

Often our winter seasons come as the result of some kind of loss. Perhaps something was stolen from us, whether it was our health, our finances, or a treasured

relationship. Although our specific circumstances may differ, we *all* experience loss at one time or another, and it’s tempting to feel angry and resentful. When I’ve experienced these feelings in my own life, they took a terrible toll on my relationship with the Lord.

Can you relate to this?

I’ve found that when we can’t see God’s hand at work in our circumstances, we usually feel He’s let us down. Amid our distress, we’re unable to recognize His strong and loving arms, always ready to comfort us.

How sad this is! Instead of

running to our Heavenly Father for strength and restoration, we end up turning away from Him, questioning why He didn't protect us.

Dear friend, no matter what you've been going through, please know that the Lord is willing and able to restore the joy of your relationship with Him (Psalm 51:12). You don't have to remain crippled by pain or stuck in an endless cycle of unforgiveness or depression.

But there's something you need to understand: If the enemy has stolen something from you, you may have to *fight* for your restoration.

CONFRONTING THE THIEF

Never forget that you have a diabolical adversary, and he's continually devising strategies to rob you of your spiritual inheritance. Jesus warned, "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy*" (John 10:10). This is still true today!

The devil is a liar, and it's crucial to recognize how he operates. You don't have to be ignorant of his schemes, for God's Word clearly describes the battle you face:

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers,

against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm (Ephesians 6:11-13 NASB).

Ephesians 6 then goes on to describe how the armor of God can protect us in every area of our life. This passage also illustrates that we have a crucial role to play in standing against the devil's strategies. When we use our spiritual weapons, we can gain full restoration of everything we've lost (1 Samuel 30:19, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

While Jesus starts John 10:10 by describing Satan as a thief, the Lord goes on to promise us victory when we follow His instructions: "*I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.*" You see, He never leaves us alone or defenseless. No matter how fierce the battle may be raging, Jesus stands ready to rout the enemy and restore peace and abundance to our lives!

FINDING HOPE

Hope plays such a vital role in our restoration. Proverbs 13:12 says, "*Hope deferred makes the heart sick.*" Have you ever felt heartsick? I sure have.

I know what it's like to sit in my chair and stare out the window, wondering where God is. I've asked at times, "Did the Lord even *hear* my cries of desperation?" My heart was sick, and this made it very difficult for His hope to be restored in my heart and mind.

During times like these, you and I must remember that God is FOR us! Even when we're puzzled why our hope has been deferred, we must be confident that He's faithful and that we're on His path to restoration.

Thankfully, Proverbs 13:12 doesn't *end* on a note of depression and hopelessness. The verse goes on to say that when our hope is restored, it will become "*a tree of life*." Instead of remaining heart-sick, we can sing hallelujah!

Even if your circumstances haven't changed yet, you can hang on to God's promises and pray verses like these:

*Restore us to You, O LORD,
that we may be restored*
(Lamentations 5:21 NASB).

He restores my soul
(Psalm 23:3).

*Restore to me the joy of
Your salvation and sustain
me with a willing spirit*
(Psalm 51:12 NASB).

I've found that God is always faithful to bring me help and restoration when I pray His Word...and I know *you* will find Him faithful too. You can be confident that He is *eager* to bring you restoration (Joel 2:25-26). His great love will break through the dark clouds, overcoming your feelings of hopelessness with a wonderful new season of healing and restoration.

But remember that there's only one place to go for the restoration you need: the loving arms of your Heavenly Father. When you suffer a loss of any kind, your Father longs for you to turn to Him for comfort and strength.

I am praying for you, dear friend, and I'm convinced God has great things in store for you in the days ahead. May His courage and hope empower you as we travel this road of restoration together.

Your friend on the journey,



P.S. Our prayer ministers are here to agree with you in prayer for the breakthrough you need today. Here's how you can contact them:

US / Canada:
+1 803-578-1800

inspiration.org/prayer

UK / International:
+44 (0) 84 5683 0584



‘One Miracle After Another!’

Deep in debt, Jamie faced a difficult crossroads in his life. But after taking a bold step of faith, he received an outpouring of God's favor and wonderful breakthroughs in his finances and family.

Drowning in debt, Jamie found himself stressed out and tormented by strained family relationships. But during this agonizing “winter season,” God surprised Jamie with a pointed question: ***“Can you be obedient to Me during the tough times?”***

“I didn’t even have enough money to pay my bills,” Jamie recalls. “Yet I sensed God instructing me to sow a financial seed into His Kingdom through Inspiration Ministries.”

Little did he know at the time, but this would be the beginning of an amazing turnaround. “There has been one miracle after another since then!” he exclaims.

Soon God had provided Jamie with money to pay off several past-due bills, two credit cards, and

most of a \$21,000 car loan.

However, as remarkable as these financial blessings were, Jamie’s most exciting breakthrough was in his relationships. “God has moved powerfully in my family!” he says. “Our relationships had been torn apart and filled with bitterness, and many of my loved ones had turned away from God.”

In this new season of miracles, many of Jamie’s loved ones came back to a vital relationship with the Lord, including Jamie’s fiancée, brother, grandmother, and an uncle and aunt!

Jamie has also been amazed by the new favor he’s experienced on his job: “God is working in every area of my life, and I know it’s because I was obedient to honor Him during the tough times.”

What God did for Jamie, He can do for you!

When you obey Him by releasing the seed in your hands, the Lord responds by releasing supernatural harvests from *His* hands! Take your step of faith by sowing a seed with the enclosed response form or at inspiration.org/souls TODAY.



Why the Women Rested

At the crucifixion of Jesus, three women stood watching: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Salome, the mother of James and John. It was a tearful and emotionally shattering moment.

Each of these women held Jesus deeply in her heart as His bloody, beaten body hung lifeless on the cross. Their hopes were dashed. Their spirits were broken.

Can you imagine the grief these women experienced as they watched the crucifixion? Yet after Jesus breathed His last, they returned to their homes with one more mission for Jesus in mind: They must anoint His body for burial.

This would be their final act of love for Jesus. Luke 23:56 (NLT) says, *“They went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time*

they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.”

How interesting...

With their last task remaining unfinished, they rested. While their feelings were still raw, their adrenaline still high, they rested. They couldn't bear the thought of Jesus lying in the tomb without His body being properly prepared for burial – nevertheless, they rested.

“They rested.” I wonder how often that could be said of you and me. Perhaps we love the Lord and have given our lives for the Gospel, but how often would a writer pen those words about us?

A TWISTED WORK ETHIC

Many of us were raised in an environment where work was the expected daily routine. We didn't

stop until the work was finished.

However, the work of life and ministry is never really finished, is it? There is always something more to do. And with our ingrained work ethic, we tend to keep going until we think the work is done.

But that's not what these women of Galilee did. Instead of frantically trying to complete the task at hand, *they rested*. Why? Because they understood the Sabbath to be both a gift and a requirement from God. The Master had taught them that the Sabbath was made for them, and not them for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

So they rested.

It's hard to have a healthy view of rest if you have an unhealthy view of who you are. In God's Kingdom, *being* comes first, and *doing* only comes out of that being.

Why does an eternal, omnipotent, inexhaustible God rest? He rested after creating the universe as an expression of His own worth and value. Instead of rest being a deficiency in His productivity, this rest was a statement of who God is. And having created us in His image and His likeness, our Heavenly Father has ordained a Sabbath rest *for us* as well.

A CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT

With everything they had on their hearts, it's stunning that the

women at the cross rested. Their devotion was heartfelt. Their efforts on Jesus' behalf were sincere. Yet this time they were called to a fast from activity.

Notice that it was while the women rested that God did His supernatural miracle in the tomb. During this pause in human activity, Jesus was resurrected – a reality that totally transformed the women's assignment. No longer did they need to anoint a lifeless body. Now they were assigned to announce a risen Savior!

Hallelujah! That same assignment is given to us today. No longer are we attending to graves and dead bodies. Our Lord is resurrected, and this has transformed our purpose in life. The stone has been rolled away, and we join the angels in pointing to an empty tomb.

Can you hear what the angels are saying?

Jesus has risen! The victory is won, and it's time to celebrate and spread the news.

But as you consider Jesus' finished work on the cross and His glorious resurrection, don't forget to rest in Him. That's the best way to declare your trust in His power to bring even dead things back to life.



CLAUDE ALEXANDER serves as senior pastor for The Park Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Getting Past Daisy-Petal Faith



JIM BUCHAN is the Director of Partner Communications at Inspiration Ministries.

In college I had a Christian friend named Keith who came from a very legalistic church background. He believed that if you sinned in even the slightest way, God would immediately revoke your salvation.

I'll never forget the letters Keith would write to me during our summer break. "Dear brother Jim," he would begin each letter, "I'm happy to report that I am still saved."

Wow. I wanted to reply to Keith, "I'm still saved too...but I never doubted that I would be!"

Although I've never met anyone whose views are as extreme as Keith's, I'm convinced many of us have a similar defect in our

theology. Maybe we're not worried about losing our salvation, but we mistakenly think our Heavenly Father's love and favor are as fleeting as a butterfly and as fragile as fine China.

Or perhaps a better word picture is the way insecure lovers sometimes peel off the petals of a daisy to ascertain where they stand in their relationship:

***"He loves me...he loves me
not...he loves me...he loves
me not..."***

Do you see how misguided this approach is when it comes to your relationship with the Lord? Yet that's exactly what you're doing if you base your confidence in God's love on your current circumstances:

You got a raise at work?

He loves me!

Your car broke down?

He loves me not!

You received an unexpected financial windfall?

He loves me!

You received bad news from your doctors?

He loves me not!

Fortunately, you can stop this daisy-petal spirituality once and for all. Instead of continually wondering if God loves you or loves you not, you can simply believe what He tells you in His Word: *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

There are two primary reasons why this is fantastic news: First, God has already demonstrated His love for you through a past event – the death of His Son on your behalf. This means there’s no need to focus on your circumstances or peel off daisy petals to determine whether He truly cares about you.

Second, it’s important to notice that God didn’t decide to love you AFTER you cleaned up your act and got perfectly sanctified. Instead, He showed His love when you were still His enemy, living a life of sin and rebellion. As the apostle Paul concludes, *“If when we*

were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

This shows that God’s love for you isn’t based on your *worthiness* but on the incredible *worth* of what Jesus did for you on the cross. Quite a difference!

Does God love you? **YES, HE DOES!** Does He want to show you His favor and bless you? **YES, HE DOES!** Is His love dependent on perfection on your part? **NO, THANKFULLY NOT!**

When you get rid of your daisy-petal view of God, you can finally **REST** in His love and mercy. Why? Because your relationship with Him is based on His grace *“from start to finish”*:

Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It’s God’s gift from start to finish! (Ephesians 2:7-8 MSG).

Are you ready to be showered with God’s grace and kindness? Then it’s time to throw away your unreliable daisy and believe His eternal love letter to you in the Scriptures.

Ever wonder why God's Word is so life-changing?

YOUR BIBLE IS...



The Sword of God's Spirit

Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17

Milk and Solid Food

Hebrews 5:12-14, 1 Peter 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Living Bread

Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4

Fire and a Hammer

Jeremiah 23:29

An Accurate Mirror

James 1:23-25

Everlasting Seed

1 Peter 1:22-25

A Lamp and a Light

Psalms 119:105, 2 Peter 1:19

Water of Cleansing

Ezekiel 36:25-26, Ephesians 5:26

Gold and Honey

Psalms 19:7-10, Psalm 119:103

An Anchor in Life's Storms

Hebrews 6:17-20



"Every Scripture has been written by the Holy Spirit, the breath of God. It will empower you by its instruction and correction, giving you the strength to take the right direction and lead you deeper into the path of godliness." 2 Timothy 3:16 TPT

Becoming a Fool

MONDAY

April

1

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ROMANS 1

Many people celebrate this as April Fool's Day. As a result, they feel entitled and even encouraged to play practical jokes. While the custom is widespread, its origins are uncertain.

One theory is that April 1 is a time on the calendar when nature *fools* us with sudden changes. Others point to the year 1582, when the Gregorian calendar was introduced and New Year's Day was moved to January 1. Refusing to change, many people continued their celebrations through April 1 and consequently were called "fools."

While people use this day as an excuse to be foolish, many others are foolish in God's sight *all the time*. As Paul wrote, many *claim* to be wise and think they know all the answers. But to God, these are merely "*foolish ideas*."

There is much to be gained from increasing our knowledge. But this is not the same as godly wisdom. God is prepared to reveal deeper revelations that can transform our lives, profound insights the world will never understand. As the Bible states, "*Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom*" (Proverbs 9:10).

The key to *real* wisdom is to start with God, and to stand on the timeless principles in His Word even if this means looking foolish in the sight of the world.

Today, be bold. Declare your faith in His Word. Seek to serve Him and live for Him.

They knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God... They began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like... Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.

Romans 1:21-22 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I worship You as God! Deliver me from the world's foolishness. Help me live according to Your Word. I trust in You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Triumphant Weapons

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 10

*The weapons we fight
with are not the
weapons of the world.
On the contrary, they
have divine power to
demolish strongholds.*

2 Corinthians 10:4 NIV

PRAYER:

Father, I am a warrior for Your Kingdom. Give me boldness. I will not accept defeat. I believe You for complete victory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Charles the Great (Charles 1 of France, or Charlemagne) was one of history's most important leaders. Born on this day in AD 742, he lived at a time when Christians were under assault. Some even doubted that Christianity would survive. A recent biography describes how Celtic missionaries influenced Charlemagne to develop a "passion for the Gospel" and the importance of serving God.

He became "aware that paganism and Christianity were locked in a battle to the death." Feeling called to be "the chosen leader" of the Christian world, Charlemagne "believed passionately" in God and "his appointed task." As a result, he was willing to go into battle, confident that every conquest was for God's glory.

As king of the Franks, Charlemagne led his people in victorious campaigns and united most of the Christian lands of Western Europe. By today's standards, some of his practices might seem questionable, but he was zealously committed to defend Christianity. His accomplishments were recognized when he was crowned the first Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day, AD 800.

Today, we too are involved in spiritual warfare. We live in times when many are determined to eradicate Christianity. We face opposition - in education, politics, entertainment, and every other area. Many atheists and skeptics ridicule anyone with Christian beliefs. We must be on guard, and we must take a stand.

Do not take this war lightly but be a committed soldier in the battle. Engage in spiritual warfare. Pray. Boldly stand on God's Word. And do not accept defeat!

Focus

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1

In his missionary journeys and writings, Paul dealt with many important issues. He established churches and interacted with people at various levels of spiritual maturity. He had many concerns, but as he told the Corinthians, his one *primary* goal was to “*preach the Gospel*” and focus on nothing else.

Paul used a Greek word that's the root for the English word “evangelism.” This word summarizes Paul's driving passion. Yes, he was concerned about other issues, but also was aware that any issue could be a *distraction*. He had to stay *focused*.

Each of us may face similar challenges. We can find ourselves pulled in many directions. Debating the ways we should spend our time and resources, we can become absorbed in whatever details seem important at the time.

Yet the Bible urges us to consider God's perspective. To ponder what really matters in light of eternity. To remember that we must seek His Kingdom *first*, for *nothing* is more important than impacting souls, spreading the Gospel, and helping believers mature in their faith.

Today, think about the things that occupy your time. Have any of these things become a *distraction*? Do you have a clear sense of God's call on your life and how you can impact the people He has brought into your life?

Don't allow distractions to sidetrack you. Make sure that you have His priorities. Stay focused on the Gospel. Do your part in the body of Christ.

Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

1 Corinthians 1:17 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, keep me from being distracted. I desire to serve You. Help me stay focused on Your Kingdom. Use me to impact others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

A Compromise

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1

The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."

1 Corinthians 1:18-19 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I believe that Your Word is true. Keep me from compromising the cross. I seek more of Your wisdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ever since the beginning of church history, many people have looked upon Christian beliefs as foolish. In an effort to make the faith more *acceptable*, some early Christians resorted to clever schemes. Others tried to make the Gospel less offensive, less controversial.

Many people in Paul's day were offended by his focus on the cross and all that it represented. But he knew what the cross was *central* to the Gospel. He knew we must *focus* on the cross, no matter how people react.

It was on the cross that Jesus sacrificed His life so that our sins might be forgiven. No wonder the Bible makes it clear that the cross needs to be a central part of our lives as believers.

Jesus also taught His disciples that the cross symbolized the commitment every believer is called to make. He said we must *deny* ourselves, take up our personal cross and follow Him wherever He leads (Matthew 16:24). Always be ready to surrender to God's will and die to self.

The cross means being willing to embrace what seems foolish to the world. But for believers, the cross is the gateway to the *"power of God."*

Don't let the world fool you with its so-called wisdom. Remember that worldly wisdom is *foolishness* to God. Seek *real* wisdom, the kind that comes when you make Jesus your Lord. Take up *your* cross and follow Him. Let Him give you real power – and the transformed life that comes through the cross.

The Mind of Christ

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 2

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul uses overwhelming terms to describe the riches God has prepared for us as believers. These blessings are beyond our understanding, so great that “*eye has not seen, nor ear heard*” (v. 9). No one can imagine all that God is ready to give those who love Him.

However, many people are not aware of these riches. And to many others, the Gospel itself makes no sense. The natural mind, no matter how brilliant, cannot really understand spiritual things. As Paul explains, the principles of God's Kingdom are nothing but “*foolishness*” to most people. The key to receiving Heaven's resources is “*the Spirit of God*.” The Greek word for Spirit is used *eight* times within five verses!

There is a divide that cannot be crossed *except* through God's Spirit. These truths *only* can be understood spiritually, by the work of the Spirit. Why? “*Because they are spiritually discerned*.” They're part of another dimension, the *spiritual* dimension.

Understanding the role of the Spirit is critical to receiving spiritual truth. Those without the Spirit cannot begin to understand the truths of God's Word or the spiritual world. They simply don't make sense to such people. We only can have the “*mind of Christ*” (v. 16) through the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can give us this understanding.

These are reasons to be filled with the Spirit. To be sensitive to the Spirit. To pray in the Spirit. And to pray that His Spirit would fall on your unbelieving friends and relatives. Today, pray that they too will have spiritual understanding and receive the riches God has prepared for them in His Kingdom.

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I seek spiritual discernment through Your Spirit. Open my eyes and heart. Give me spiritual insights! In Jesus' name. Amen.

Spiritual Food

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 3

I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger.

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 NLT

Paul was concerned. In spite of all he had taught them, the Corinthian Christians were not *maturing* as believers. Something was holding them back. They were not able to receive the “solid food” that Paul wanted to give them.

The problem? The flesh still dominated the lives of these believers. As a result, they were spiritual infants. To use a parallel from the natural world, we grow physically when we receive the right nourishment. Without this food, our growth is stunted, and we never fully develop. We are likely to become anemic or even die.

These same principles are true in the spiritual world. Some may be born again and even know God, but they never mature. They remain spiritually weak and underdeveloped, never reaching their full potential as Christians.

The answer to this problem? A regular intake of solid spiritual food. Then we must put what we've learned into practice. We must spend more time with God, and less time focusing on our fleshly interests.

How do we get this spiritual nourishment? By feeding on the Bible, letting God's Word sink deeply into our minds and hearts. By being completely absorbed in the Lord's teachings, realizing that His words give us life. By knowing that Jesus is “*the bread of life*” (John 6:35).

Today, remember that you can choose what you think and what you allow into your mind. It's up to you to determine how you spend your time. If you want to grow spiritually, nourish yourself with spiritual food. Crave God's Word, and feed on Jesus, the bread of life.

Today on INSPIRATION TV



Your Role

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 3

Every Christian has a role to play in God's Kingdom. Some are like Paul, serving on the front lines of ministry. Some plant the seed of the Gospel in the lives of others. Some water these seeds, providing encouragement or supporting the work that is being done. Others are called to labor behind the scenes, getting little attention.

In the process, when everything works together, there is a harvest. Seeds develop their full potential, and lives are changed. *Every* part of the process is important. God knows that the harvest cannot be bountiful unless each person is fully committed and does the work to which they have been called.

Paul reminds us that each person will be rewarded based on their "*own labor*" (v. 8). If we are good stewards, completing the assignments God has given us, we will receive a good reward.

Today, ask God to show you your role in His Kingdom. You may have a ministry of sowing seeds from the resources God has given you. You may be called to be a prayer warrior or a teacher, or he may want you to focus on your role in the family.

Remember that God has given you time, talent, and treasure, with opportunities to use these gifts for His glory. But you also have choices to make. You can labor for the temporary things of this world, or invest your resources in His Kingdom.

Always remember that you only can reap what you sow. And don't forget that you've been blessed so you can be a blessing.

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I commit my time, talent, and treasure to You. Show me my role in Your Kingdom. Use me to impact lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Wood, Hay & Stubble

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 3

If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work.

1 Corinthians 3:12-13 KJV

PRAYER:

Father, show me how I can invest my time and resources on things that will last. I want You to be pleased when I stand before You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In the moment, some things may *seem* important. They appear to be high priorities, worthy of our effort and energies. But in fact, over time it can become clear that many of these things really aren't that important.

The Bible calls these trivial pursuits "*wood, hay, and stubble*." These are the *temporary* things that can distract us and occupy our time and attention. The sad fact is that many Christians still are *focused* on these temporary things.

While God has given us the freedom to make choices, the Bible also reminds us that He is our Judge. He evaluates how we invest our time and resources. We all need to remember that one day *everything* we do will be *tested by fire*. Some work will survive, while some will not.

Pursuing temporary things may not prevent us from spending eternity with Jesus, but it will keep us from receiving God's fullest blessings. The Bible tells us, "*If a man's work be destroyed under the test, he loses it all*" (1 Corinthians 3:15 Phillips).

Today, think about the choices you are making with your time, talent, and treasure. Have you been investing in wood, hay, and stubble? What will happen when your works are tested by fire?

Ask God to give you His priorities. Surrender your life anew to Him. Make sure you are laying the right foundation, investing your resources in God's Kingdom and ready to face Him when you die.

The Power of God

TUESDAY

April

9

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 4

As we look at the world, it is hard not to notice massive problems. It can be easy to become discouraged and overwhelmed. Even to feel complacent. In this environment, the words we speak are important. But we must never forget the importance of God's power.

Paul urged the Corinthians to realize that God's power is central to His Kingdom. The demonstrations of this power provide *proof* that God is still on His throne and actively involved in human affairs. They prove that the Gospel is true that our faith is not an empty religion or a set of rules, but rather a *relationship* with the living God.

The early church grew when God's power was manifested. When the sick were healed and there were extraordinary miracles. No one could argue with supernatural power like that. It challenged the skeptics and changed the destiny of nations. It gave hope to the desperate, peace to the troubled, and joy to the weary.

When the Kingdom of God comes in power, we experience a realm that is supernatural, beyond human understanding. It's a kingdom where the Spirit of God is demonstrated in *action*. The Bible promises that God's power is as real today as it was in the early church, and you have full access to all of this power. Yet to be empowered in this way, you need the Holy Spirit flowing in your life.

Right now, cry out to God for His power. Seek to be filled with His Spirit. Be ready to step out in faith. Be ready to let that power flow through you to people around you. Prepare to bring more of His Kingdom to your world.

For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

1 Corinthians 4:20 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I seek more of Your power. Fill me with Your Spirit. Give me boldness and opportunities to exercise my faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.

What You Do Matters

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 5

*I wrote you in my letter
not to associate with
immoral people...not
to associate with any
so-called brother if he
is an immoral person...
not even to eat with
such a one.*

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, help me to live so others can see Jesus in me. Give me discernment about the people with whom I associate. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Bible makes it clear that we are to be motivated by love. We are to love other believers (John 17:23), and even our enemies (Luke 6:27). To seek to “*preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3). To forgive others always (Matthew 6:12).

As Christians we need to be concerned about the impact of our actions. In the early church, some who professed to being believers were living in “*immoral ways*” that could not be ignored. Such conduct infected the body of Christ with a kind of spiritual cancer, and Paul insisted that it had to be removed from their midst (v. 13).

Following Paul's example, we need to realize there are standards that must be maintained, for we're all accountable for what we do. However, we also need to exercise this accountability in a spirit of love and forgiveness.

This is why the written Word is so important. In all of his letters, Paul was defining what it means to live as a believer, and why our behavior matters. He wanted his readers to *know* God's standards and live according to Biblical principles.

You may be tempted to live like people around you, and to do what others say is acceptable. But always remember that your behavior demonstrates what you believe. Your actions *matter*. In the so-called gray areas, you can find God's timeless standards in His Word. In every situation, make that your authority and the reference point for your life.

Apply What You Know

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 6

Paul knew it was essential to remind the Corinthians of what they had been taught. To make this point, he repeated the Greek phrase translated “*do you not know*” six separate times in this chapter.

Clearly, there was a gap between what these Corinthians should have *known* and what they were *doing*. They had many problems and questions, but in the essential matters God already had provided the wisdom they needed. They simply needed to *apply* these truths.

In similar ways, we too may need reminders. We may be experiencing problems because we’re not acting according to the truths God has revealed to us. We might be facing defeat because we are not applying the principles in His Word.

God has provided us with the keys to success and victorious living through His Word. However, if we know what to do but refuse to do it, we can expect a myriad of problems. We will forfeit God’s fullest blessings in our life.

The Bible reminds us that God wants to set us free and bless us abundantly. But receiving these blessings requires that we align our lives with the Lord, knowing and obeying His Word. This means putting into action the principles we already know to be true. The Bible even tells us that “*it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it*” (James 4:17 NLT)

Today, remind yourself of the truths in God’s Word. Then don’t forget to apply them!

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?...Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

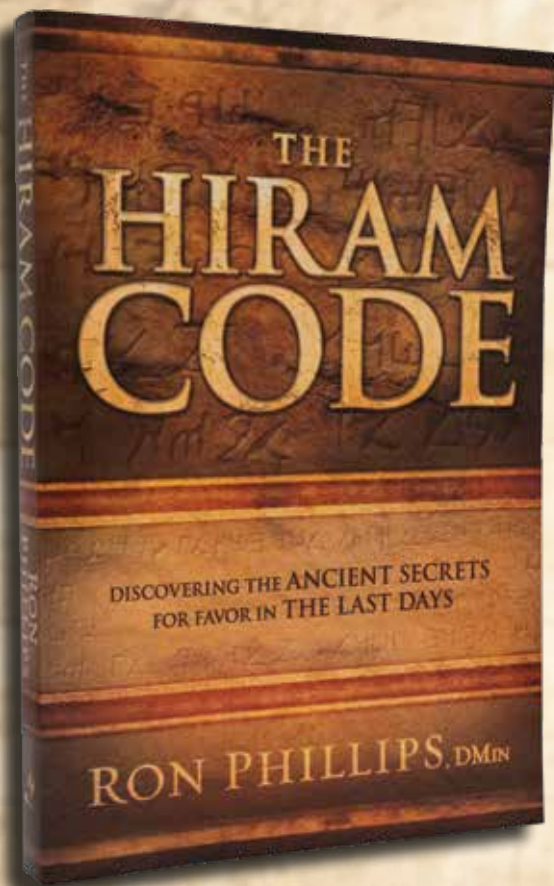
1 Corinthians 6:2, 19 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the truths You’ve provided for me in Your Word. Help me to apply these truths in my life. Thank You for victory! In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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Puffed Up or Built Up?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 8

We know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

1 Corinthians 8:1-2 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, I humble myself before You. Fill me with Your love. Help me to be Your instrument in spreading the Gospel. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Food offered to idols presented a major problem for first-century Christians. To settle the matter, church leaders decided on one firm rule: Gentiles should *“abstain from the things polluted by idols”* (Acts 15:20). This was essential in order to be good witnesses, and to live in ways that were pleasing to God. But Paul felt that a deeper issue was involved: *knowledge*.

Some Christians seemed to act as if they were especially important because of the things they knew. Yet Paul stressed that *everyone* has some kind of unique knowledge, tempting them to rely on themselves and their special insights. Such knowledge was potentially dangerous, leading to pride and a feeling of superiority.

This smug attitude about our knowledge can be crippling to Christians. But there's an antidote: *love*! While knowledge can cause us to become proud, love always *“builds up.”* The Greek word refers to a person who builds a house. While those motivated by knowledge can tear down, those motivated by love will be *constructive*. By our knowledge we even can destroy *“the brother for whom Christ died.”* Even though we feel completely justified in our actions, we can harm others and *“sin against Christ”* (vs. 11-12). Paul later warned that if we have *“all knowledge”* but don't have love, we are *“nothing”* (1 Corinthians 13:2). Thus, knowledge without love is meaningless and ineffective. It's just a collection of information.

Ask God to fill your life with love. Be careful about communicating what you *know*. Instead, seek to be *motivated* by love, always building up others.

Willing Servants

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 9

From the moment Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul consistently sought to follow His leading and demonstrate his commitment to the Gospel. Blessed with a brilliant mind, he could have had a lucrative career and accumulated great riches. Instead, he set everything aside to follow the Lord, no matter where He led.

To Paul, serving Jesus was more important than any personal reward or honor. He was willing to become His servant. In this, he was following the example set by Jesus who left the glories of heaven to come to the earth. As Paul wrote, Jesus “*humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*” (Philippians 2:8 NASB).

This kind of commitment can be difficult, because we naturally tend to think first about ourselves. But God has given us the ability to choose our priorities. We can pursue the temporary rewards of this life, or we can seek the Kingdom that will last into eternity. All the while, we need to remember that “*the world is passing away...but the one who does the will of God lives forever*” (1 John 2:17 NASB).

Today, think about *your* choices. What is most important to you? Your rights? Your temporary rewards and pleasures? Or are you willing to put everything else aside in order to serve God?

Follow Paul's example. Take up your cross and follow Jesus. Surrender your life to Him. Seek to have the attitude of a servant.

Although I am free in every way from anyone's control, I have made myself a bond servant to everyone, so that I might gain the more [for Christ].

1 Corinthians 9:19

AMPC

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, I offer myself as Your servant. Guide me. I seek to follow wherever You lead. Use me to impact others. In Your name. Amen.

When Rocks Cry Out

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: LUKE 19

The whole multitude... began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice... "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But He answered... "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Luke 19:37-40 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I praise You for sending Jesus to die for my sins. I rejoice for all that You have done for me. I worship You! In Jesus' name. Amen.

When Jesus entered into Jerusalem, crowds gathered, greeting Him by praising God *"with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen"* (v. 37). The Pharisees were not happy with this demonstration, and asked Jesus to rebuke those who demonstrated.

But Jesus knew that this response of praise was important. He explained that if the people kept quiet, *"the stones would immediately cry out."*

Yes, God can make the rocks cry out. But He is *delighted* when His people praise Him of their own free will. When we praise God, we don't need to hold back, for He welcomes those who praise Him *"with a loud voice."*

Heaven is a place filled with praise. Isaiah *"saw the LORD, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple"* seraphims called out, *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory"* (Isaiah 6:1, 3 NIV).

The last book of the Bible describes how the angels and elders in Heaven fall on their faces and worship God, saying, *"Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever"* (Revelation 7:12 NIV).

Today, remember that God *delights* in praise. No matter what you are going through, think about all the ways that He has blessed you. Rejoice and join the angels in praising Him. He is worthy!

It is easy to forget that there is only one body of Christ. That Christ is the head and all of us are just parts. This is true for *everyone*. And it's true no matter our personal wealth, rank, or accomplishments. *Every* person is important.

Furthermore, God has set each of us within the body "*just as He pleased*." In other words, our role was decided by Him! We are His *servants*, not here for our own convenience or pleasure. He has placed each person in a *special* position. Then He gives us gifts, talents, resources, and opportunities because He has tasks He wants us to perform.

There may be times when we are tempted to complain. We may feel taken for granted or not appreciated. We might wish we could receive more recognition or a different assignment.

The Bible reminds us that no one has a reason to complain or boast. Instead, we should be grateful for the privilege of serving Him, and focus on completing our assignments, always remembering that He knows everything we do.

Today, remember that you have been blessed that you might bless others. Remember that you are part of Christ's body. You have a unique role to play. He has given you abilities and resources because He has a special calling for you. Commit your time, talent, and treasure to God, and seek to fulfill your part in the body of Christ.

The body is not one member but many...

God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

1 Corinthians 12:14, 18
NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have given me. Help me to use these gifts for Your Kingdom. I desire to serve others in the Christ's body. In His name. Amen.

Alive in Christ

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead...For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:19-22
NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that I have been made alive through Jesus. Renew me by Your Spirit. May Your power flow through me to bless others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

If the only thing that matters is success in this life, Paul recognized that believers are “*most to be pitied*.” For if that were true, why have we willingly surrendered our lives to Christ?

Paul knew that the benefits of believing in Christ are far beyond anything the mortal mind can conceive. He described a *glorious* existence that skeptics could never imagine. Through Jesus, we experience a new dimension. We have eternal life and can experience something *supernatural*: resurrection!

Through the resurrection, we've been “*made alive*.” The Greek word pictures what happens in nature. In springtime, tiny seeds that seem lifeless and inanimate somehow burst forth from the soil and become plants, trees, and flowers. Shrubs that were dormant in winter now bloom again. This is the kind of *transformation* that takes place through God's resurrection power in the life of a believer.

In Christ, we are no longer dead in our sins. We are “*made alive*.” More than just renewed, we are *invigorated* by His spiritual power.

Today, do you feel weary? Discouraged? Tired? Confused? Uncertain? Do you face problems that seem insurmountable, or obstacles that seem impossible to overcome? No matter what is going on, remember that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Every enemy *already* has been defeated. Because of what Christ has done, you really *can* experience His resurrection power!

If you believe in Jesus, have faith and do not doubt. You can be *invigorated* right now. You can be transformed and made alive. You can live in victory.

Feeling Troubled?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JOHN 14

It was a decisive moment for Jesus' disciples. As they gathered together to celebrate the Passover, He made it clear that *dramatic* changes were coming. He even told them that one of them would betray Him.

In light of these stunning developments, it would have been natural for them to feel *worried* and *anxious*. Seeking to calm their spirits, Jesus told the disciples not to let their hearts be "*troubled*." He used a Greek word that suggests being *agitated*. Feeling *restless*. Overwhelmed with fear. *Perplexed* about how to respond.

Many things that can create these kinds of reactions. At times we experience seemingly insurmountable problems. Our hearts are stirred, and our emotions seem out of control. It is hard to think clearly and we don't know what to do.

In any condition, Jesus' words have special meaning. He said, "*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.*"

When anything starts to worry or trouble us, we need to turn to Jesus. To focus on Him. We do not need to fear any person or situation, whether big or small. Jesus has prepared a place for us.

Is your heart filled with any troubles? Are you worried? Afraid? Restless? Perplexed? These are opportunities to trust in Jesus. Commit your needs to Him. Ask Him to take away any worries. Seek His peace.

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me...I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

John 14:1-3 NKJV

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You that I don't have to be troubled. Thank You for preparing a place for me. Thank You for peace. In Your name. Amen.

A New Commandment

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JOHN 13

*A new commandment
I give to you, that you
love one another, even
as I have loved you...*

*By this all men will
know that you are My
disciples, if you have
love for one another.*

John 13:34-35 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all that Jesus has done for me. Let Your love flow through my life. Help me to show Your love to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Since the early church, the day before Good Friday has been known as Maundy Thursday. This is when we commemorate the night before Jesus was betrayed. We remember the night He celebrated Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper, and when He gave the disciples an example of being a servant by washing their feet.

A crowning moment was the “*new commandment*” Jesus issued. This was not a request or suggestion but a real *command*. In fact, “Maundy” comes from the Latin word that means “command.” This is the source of our English word “mandate.” Maundy Thursday has also been important for its emphasis on personal purity and the need to be clean before God. As Paul reminded us, “*everyone ought to examine themselves*” before taking the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:28 NIV).

There are many ways Christians have celebrated this day throughout history. Some churches still hold special services. But in our busy culture, this day is more often ignored and overlooked. This is sad, because every Christian should remember the things this day symbolizes.

Today, in this holy week, don't forget the many messages of Maundy Thursday. Remember Jesus' example, and strive to be a servant. Seek to be clean before God by confessing your sins. Obey the new commandment Jesus gave us. And remember that others will know that you're His disciple if you show them His love. This is not an option but a command and mandate.

God's Time, God's Plan

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MARK 14

FRIDAY

April

19

The religious leaders of Jesus' day knew well the significance of Passover. No doubt they were familiar with every detail described in Exodus 12:11-14.

The Passover had become an entrenched part of life, and people like Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem every year during Passover (Luke 2:41). As the population swelled, everyone was on alert. Anticipating possible trouble, the Romans were determined to maintain order, while the Jewish authorities knew they needed to do their part too.

But Jesus presented a problem. The Jewish leaders already felt that He needed to be eliminated, but they were concerned about doing anything during Passover. Somehow they needed to take action without sparking a riot. They were delighted when Judas agreed to betray Jesus. The opportunity to capture Jesus came on the night after He had celebrated Passover with His disciples. It was a moment when He literally became the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

Rushing Him through a trial, the Jewish leaders were determined to orchestrate events according to *their* timing. They thought they were accomplishing their purposes. However, in reality they were fulfilling *God's* plan – a plan He had set in motion centuries earlier.

Passover, which begins tonight at sunset, reminds us that Jesus perfectly fulfilled God's promises, demonstrating His sovereignty over time and history. Through Him, you can be freed from sin and death. He is your hope, your Savior. He is the Messiah, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

*The Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him...
"Not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people."*

Mark 14:1-2 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to take away my sins! Thank You for having a plan for my life. I trust in You. In His name. Amen.

Make Your Life Count

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JOHN 19

Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!"

John 19:5 NASB

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for suffering and dying for my sins. I commit my life to You. Use me to impact lives for Your Kingdom. In Your name. Amen.

The German nobleman Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, born in Dresden in 1700, received the finest education of his time. Raised in a strong Christian home, he decided to follow Christ at the age of six.

For the several years, Count Zinzendorf *thought* he was fully committed until one day in May 1719. While visiting an art museum in Dusseldorf at age 19, Zinzendorf saw a painting by the Italian artist Domenico Feti titled *Ecce Homo* ("Behold the Man").

This painting portrays Jesus after He was sentenced by Pilate. The Savior is wearing the crown of thorns, and His hands rest on a block etched with words in Latin: "This have I done for you; now what will you do for Me?"

Zinzendorf was stunned. Feeling immediate conviction, he made a radical commitment to fully follow Jesus. As a result, he went on to become an influential champion of evangelism. Feti's painting now hangs in a gallery in Florence, Italy. Although it doesn't dazzle people with its artistic brilliance or technique, its powerful message still is true.

In Feti's masterful hands, *Ecce Homo* reminds us of all that Jesus suffered. How the Roman soldiers scourged Him and put a crown of thorns on His head. How they mocked Him, saying, "*Hail, King of the Jews!*" How Pilate found no guilt in Jesus, and declared, "*Behold the Man.*" And how the crowd cried out, "*Crucify Him!*" before Jesus was sent to the cross.

Today, remember all that Jesus did for *you*. Let the message of Feti's painting speak to you. How will you respond? What will *you* do for Jesus?

Resurrection Hope

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 PETER 1

Sometime around 1888, Austrian conductor and composer Gustav Mahler completed the first movement of a new symphony that depicted a hero who had experienced hopelessness. For years, Mahler had struggled in vain to finish the symphony, unable to find a satisfactory resolution. But everything changed on March 29, 1894.

While attending a funeral that day, Mahler heard the choir sing the “Resurrection” chorale by German poet Friedrich Klopstock. It was, as Mahler recalled, “like a flash of lightning.” Mahler realized that the solution to his unfinished symphony was in *resurrection*. The resurrection brings meaning to life, for instead of the dark conclusion of death, we can have *hope*.

This realization inspired Mahler to complete his composition, which became known as *The Resurrection Symphony*. Celebrating Jesus’ triumphal resurrection, Mahler’s symphony continues to inspire audiences to this day. Sadly, however, although Mahler’s music celebrated Christ’s triumph, he never fully embraced the power of the Lord’s resurrection in his personal life.

Many people are like Mahler. They know *about* the resurrection but are not *transformed* by it. The resurrection is a fact of history, and it literally changes *everything*. It gives life meaning and unleashes God’s power in all who believe. The resurrection makes it possible for us to live in victory!

Are *you* being transformed through God’s resurrection power? Jesus has overcome death, and through Him you’re *more* than a conqueror. Don’t accept defeat. Believe God and receive full victory. *Today!*

Blessed be the God and Father...who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the resurrection. Allow Your resurrection power to flow through me today. Thank You for victory! In Jesus’ name. Amen.

He Is Risen!

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MATTHEW 28

He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Matthew 28:6 NKJV

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for the resurrection. I believe that You rose from the dead. Thank You that I can triumph over every foe! In Your name. Amen.

As a young man, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther faced the reality of death. While attending college in Leipzig, Germany, he suffered a crippling lung disease. During the months required for recuperation, he poured himself into Bible study and the writings of Martin Luther.

Walther's studies brought him closer to the Lord but also led him to conclusions that conflicted with church officials. Seeking freedom to follow his convictions, he migrated to America and settled near St. Louis. There he helped establish the Lutheran Church's Missouri Synod.

Although the work was challenging, Walther made a huge impact. But as his health began to decline, he decided to return to Germany for a time of rest. He was at sea on Easter 1860 when he became inspired to write the hymn "He's Risen, He's Risen!" It was later translated into English by Anna M. Meyer.

In this hymn, Walther expressed the triumph found in the resurrection: "He's risen, He's risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord." He declared that Jesus opened "death's prison" and set all who believe in Him free.

Even though Jesus is "the Lord of creation," He was "nailed to the tree." His foes thought they had won, but "short was their triumph," because Jesus arose from the dead. He vanquished every foe, including death, hell, and Satan.

No matter what challenges you face, this is a day to celebrate. Jesus has risen! And because of Him, you can be more than a conqueror.

Many consider Titian the greatest painter of the 16th century, perhaps even the greatest of all time. Born in 1488 in northeastern Italy, he gained fame after settling in Venice. Many of his masterpieces focused on Biblical themes.

In 1543, Titian turned his attention to the moment when Pilate presented Jesus to the crowd that was demanding His crucifixion. Like Domenico Feti's painting by the same name, this painting is also called *Ecce Homo* (Latin for "Behold, the Man"). Titian's painting features a special focus on those in the crowd. Some of them are waving their arms. One man is listening carefully. Jesus and Pilate are standing in the upper left corner, with a Roman soldier crouching just below them. And in the center of the painting we see a young boy who is screaming.

A bearded man in the painting (possibly modeled after the patron who commissioned it) is looking at two men on horseback. One of the two horsemen is Suleiman the Magnificent, the powerful Ottoman sultan who was threatening Europe with his radical Islamic vision. The other is a Roman commander, who appears sympathetic to Christ. When one studies this painting, it becomes clear that Titian dealt with issues relevant to his time. But the painting also urges us to think about *our* time and *our* lives.

Ultimately, we all need to picture ourselves, standing in the crowd before Pilate and Jesus. We can imagine the political and social forces of our time, including the current clash of ideas and cultures.

Titian's message is that we all need to make a decision about Jesus. Who is He to *you*?

Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!"

John 19:5 NASB

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. You are my Savior and Lord. I submit my life to You. In Your name. Amen.

Christ Crucified

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1

*Jews request a sign,
and Greeks seek after
wisdom; but we preach
Christ crucified, to the
Jews a stumbling block
and to the Greeks
foolishness.*

1 Corinthians 1:22-23 NKJV

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for me. I glory in the cross and what it means to me. I surrender my life to You. In Your name. Amen.

The cross makes some people uncomfortable. Many would rather focus on love or the gentle Christ Child in the manger. Others think of Jesus simply as a wise man, full of good teachings and parables.

Paul pointed out that some find the cross a “*stumbling block*.” The Greek word comes from the part of a trap to which bait is attached. In the same way, the cross is a cause for *stumbling* for many people, seeming like nothing more than a trap. And to others, the cross is just foolish.

But Christians must never can forget that the cross is central to our faith. Our attitude toward the cross provides a test to see if we have truly yielded our will to God. When we focus on the cross, we place His will above our own, and thus show that we have really made Jesus our Lord.

The cross also points us to the reality of death and the resurrection, and it opens the door to the supernatural realm. The cross means that there is only one way to God, and that way is through the death of Jesus.

Without Jesus' death, we would have remained dead in our sins and guilty before God. To be set free, we must embrace the cross and all that it represents.

Today, remember that Jesus died on the cross for you. Surrender your time, talent, and treasure to Him, right now, and seek His Kingdom and His righteousness. Die to self, and live your life for Jesus!

God's Opportunity

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: LUKE 22

In many ways, this moment was the low point in Peter's life. He always had been proud and self-confident, sure of his abilities. But now, waiting in the courtyard while Jesus was on trial, he proved to be a coward, denying even knowing the Lord. Grieved when he realized what he had done, he left the courtyard and wept bitterly.

Yet from another perspective, this was a major *turning point*. Peter suddenly became conscious of his own weaknesses. He became broken and vulnerable, ready to be used by God in new ways.

Peter's ministry really began at this low point, when he stopped depending on his own strength. He saw the futility of his human effort. Peter needed to fail and stumble, so he could realize that He needed God's power and strength.

Paul had a similar revelation. He described taking "pleasure" in experiences that revealed his weaknesses. Why? "*When I am weak, then I am strong*," he explained (2 Corinthians 12:10).

This is a discovery that each of us needs to make. The Bible assures us that God is ready to give us His power and wisdom. But we cannot know His fullness as long as we trust in ourselves and our own abilities. We must surrender to Him. That's when He can fill us with His Spirit, use us for His glory, and bless our lives in amazing ways.

Humble yourself before God today. Be willing to see your mistakes and frustrations as opportunities to turn to God, and become a vessel for His supernatural wisdom and power.

Peter remembered the word of the Lord...

"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:61-62 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, forgive me for trusting in myself. I depend on You for the power, strength, and wisdom I need. Help me to serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

How Others See Jesus

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: LUKE 23

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had...heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.

Luke 23:8 NKJV

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, You are my Lord. I surrender my life to You. I commit these needs to You: _____. Thank You for the answer. In Your name. Amen.

Herod was “*exceedingly glad*” to see Jesus. Why? He was *curious*. He had heard much about this man, and he wanted to learn more for himself. But in many ways, Herod probably just wanted to be entertained. After hearing about miracles Jesus had performed, he wanted to see some firsthand.

In his quest to learn more, Herod “*questioned Him with many words*.” Perhaps he goaded Jesus, eager for a response. Perhaps he was hoping Jesus would defend Himself with some miraculous display. Yet Jesus would not play this game. In fact, “*He answered him nothing*” (v. 9).

Many people have a similar view of Jesus. For some He is a subject of curiosity. Others want to be entertained, seeking signs and wonders or a sensational spectacle for their amusement. But like Herod, such people end up disappointed when Jesus won't cooperate.

The Bible reminds us that Jesus came to proclaim the Good News. To meet people's needs. To heal the sick and teach people about the power of God.

But Jesus did not come to be an entertainer. While He disappointed people like Herod, He met the needs of the thousands who sought Him with a pure heart.

What is *your* attitude toward Jesus? How do *you* approach Him? Is He simply a figure from history? An intriguing man who started a religious movement? A good teacher? Or is He the Lord of your life? Do you have a real, intimate relationship with Him?

Who's the Real Jesus?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MATTHEW 16

A recent television special declared an intention to find the “real” Jesus. In the process, the producers concluded that history does not support the Gospel story. To them, Jesus was just a political rebel. And they denied that He rose from the grave.

These kinds of doubts are not new. People have drawn similar conclusions about Jesus since the first century. . For whatever reason, millions have rejected the Gospel and developed theories that satisfy their desire to go their own way.

But opinion-makers like TV writers and producers cannot change the fact that each of us must know for *ourselves* who Jesus is. It's not enough to know *about* Him; we must know Him *personally*.

Even in Jesus' own day, people disagreed about this question. Peter said that others had different opinions, but he knew that Jesus was “*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

Jesus *still* is the Son of the living God. He *still* is “*the way, the truth, and the life.*” And no one will ever come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). Tragically, millions never find the way. Filled with skepticism and a desire to think and do as they please, they reject Jesus as their Lord.

Today, make sure you have a rock-solid belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. If you have doubts, ask Him to reveal His reality to you right now. You cannot afford to be uncertain about Jesus!

“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?...

But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Matthew 16:13-16 NKJV

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be my Savior. No matter what others might say, I know that He is the Christ, Your Son. In His name. Amen.

The Journey of Faith

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 11

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going.

Hebrews 11:8 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. Help me to walk by faith. Thank You for directing my steps and guiding me. I trust You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Born in London in April 1770, David Thompson was one of the most important explorers in the history of North America. He has been called “the greatest land geographer who ever lived,” yet he received little credit during his lifetime. Only after his death did the world realize the extent of his accomplishments. Thompson’s life of adventure began when he was just 14, after being sent to western Canada to work in the fur-trading business. Three years later, driven by curiosity, he left on a personal journey. Walking throughout the prairies, he encountered many types of peoples and explored uncharted places.

Along the way, Thompson learned astronomy and mathematics, and spent so much time examining the heavens that he lost sight in one eye. After suffering a broken leg, he limped the rest of his life. He could have given up, but he continued to explore, even mapping much of Canada and the US. Overall, Thompson traveled more than 100,000 miles in his life, a remarkable achievement for his day.

The Bible describes the impact of pioneers like this who accomplished great things in the spiritual realm. Abraham and many other Biblical heroes dared to venture into the unknown. Despite the risks and uncertainties, they were willing to leave the comfort and safety of home to follow God’s leading, trusting Him completely.

These are people who lived by faith. As a result, they experienced new possibilities and new dimensions of God’s blessings. They also pointed the way for others, making a difference for time and eternity.

The Harvest Fields

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JOHN 4

MONDAY

April

29

Some Christians become weary when they hear appeals about giving to missions or evangelism. Many feel that enough is already being done. "I've already done what I can," they say. "Let someone else respond." But our attitude will change when we consider the enormity of the mission yet to be accomplished.

We should rejoice that missionaries are laboring in the field. We should also celebrate the wonderful work being done around the world through Christian media. Yet, despite these efforts, Operation World reports that "more than two billion people have *never* even heard the name of Jesus." Some 13,000 cultures have not yet been reached with the Gospel.

Think about these staggering numbers! *Billions* of people and *thousands* of cultures have not been exposed to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Numbers like these can be overwhelming, but the Great Commission is the assignment Jesus gave to us. Every believer can play an important role.

What can you do? First, you can *pray*. Remember that millions are going into an eternity without ever hearing about Jesus. Pray that souls will be saved. Pray for those who labor in God's vineyard. Pray for doors to the Gospel to be opened. Second, you can *give* to soul-winning ministries. And third, you can *go*. Maybe you only can go to the house next door, but go where God leads you and tell people about Jesus.

The fields are ready for harvest, but more *laborers* are needed. Be willing to give of your time, talent, and treasure so that more souls might be saved.

Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

John 4:35 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, give me a burden for the Lost. Open up doors for the Gospel throughout the world. I dedicate my life to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

God's Powerful Word

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 4

The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your Word. Help me to apply its principles and learn more. I dedicate my life to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Orville Nave was born on this day in 1841. After becoming a chaplain in the United States Army, he learned that many officers believed that chaplains often were appointed because of their political connections. There also was a widespread belief that the chaplains were largely ineffective. In response, Nave organized the United Christian Commission, a group of interdenominational church representatives committed to addressing this situation.

While serving as a chaplain, Nave also became concerned about the need to help soldiers understand more about the Bible and apply its principles in their daily lives. So he began working on a topical Bible, a project that took 14 years. When completed, *Nave's Topical Bible* included approximately 20,000 individual topics and subtopics, as well as 100,000 Scripture references.

In his preface, Nave wrote that his topical Bible was "the result of fourteen years of delightful and untiring study of the Word of God." This resource opened up God's Word in a new way to many, both in the military and in civilian life. It still is read and used by thousands of people every week.

In your life, remember that God's Word is filled with power. It deals with every possible subject, including finances and relationships... attitudes and actions... thoughts and emotions.

Don't allow the devil to steal the victory God has prepared for you. Fill your mind and heart with the Word of God. Confess it, and put it into action. It will change every part of your life.



Surrounded *by* FAVOR

In Psalm 3, King David found himself in quite a predicament. Although he was trying to live a life pleasing to the Lord, he found himself surrounded by enemies on every side:

*LORD, how they have increased who trouble me!
Many are they who rise up against me.
Many are they who say of me,
“There is no help for him in God” (vs. 1-2).*

Perhaps you’ve experienced similar times in your own life, when your enemies were near and the Lord seemed far away. Yet this was not the end of the story. God lifted David up and provided him with a supernatural “shield” – just as He will do for you today:

*You, O LORD, are a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head (v. 3).*

In Psalm 5, David explains more about what this amazing shield consists of:

*You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor
You will surround him as with a shield (v. 12).*



PERRY STONE is an international evangelist, author, Bible prophecy expert, and the founder of Voice of Evangelism.

This wasn't just *any* shield. It was a shield of God's favor! Instead of being worried about the enemies surrounding him, David suddenly realized that the favor of God was guarding him.

The word *favor* is found 70 times in the English translation of the Bible, and it is described as having many different benefits:

1. Favor can come in strange places.

Would you expect to find favor while locked up in a prison? Although Joseph was falsely accused and imprisoned, "*The LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor*" (Genesis 39:21). This story reveals a dynamic truth: Your present surroundings have no bearing on God's ability to bring favor into your life.

2. Favor can bring unexpected income.

When the Israelites came out of bondage in Egypt, they received their "back pay" for working overtime: "*The LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians*" (Exodus 12:36).

When Moses later received an offering to build the Tabernacle, the Egyptians' gold was used in the furniture. This illustrates

Solomon's words, "*The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just*" (Proverbs 13:22 KJV).

3. Favor can bring the right companion into your life.

Ruth had a lot working against her. In addition to being a widow and a stranger in the land of Israel, she was a Moabite – and the Jews didn't take kindly to Moabites. Yet Ruth chose to break away from her *past* and allow the Lord to direct her *path*.

When she met Boaz, she told him, "*Let me find favor in your sight...*" (Ruth 2:13). Boaz allowed Ruth to glean in his barley field and eventually married her! When you've asked for God's favor in giving you a marriage partner, you don't have to chase some man or woman around, endlessly trying to get their attention. His favor can act like a magnet and attract the right person into your life.

4. Favor can stop a national disaster.

When a wicked man named Haman set out to destroy the Jewish people, the plot was foiled when Queen Esther was willing to appear before the king and intercede for favor. Esther 5:2 reads, "*When the King saw Esther standing in the*

court, she obtained grace and **favor** in his sight." Five times the Bible mentions how Esther received favor in the sight of the king.

5. Favor can bring the miracle birth of a child.

Many barren women in the Bible conceived after a visitation from God. Although Mary was a pure virgin while engaged to Joseph, the angel Gabriel told her she would bear a child: "*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found **favor** with God*" (Luke 1:30).

6. Favor can be obtained with God and also with people.

God's Word speaks of receiving favor with GOD and with MAN: "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in **favor** with God and men*" (Luke 2:52).

Why is this important? Because God often uses PEOPLE to bless your life (Luke 6:38). Whether it's your boss, a coworker, a person in your church, or someone involved in a business deal, you need people's favor to open doors for your success.

No matter what kind of difficult circumstances you may be facing, remember that God wants to surround you with His favor today. **His favor will change your life!**

Want to UNLOCK God's Favor in Your Life?

Our prayer ministers are
here to pray for you!



*"I've been sowing financial seeds for God's Kingdom into your ministry, and I believe this has been a key to the miracles that have happened in my life. Recently, the bank modified our home mortgage and reduced the principal by \$119,538.31! **Talk about the favor of God!** I can't praise Him enough." – JANNAE*

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"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

– John 8:12 NIV

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'We Canceled Our Suicide Plans!'



Faced with overwhelming financial lack and receiving no help from their Hindu gods, Moses and Sarah thought suicide was the only way out. But everything changed when the one true God spoke to them through a Christian TV broadcast.

Have you ever wondered if Christian television can truly change lives? Then take a look at this incredible story of how the Lord averted the suicides of Moses and Sarah, a devout Hindu couple in India.

"My wife and I were drowning in debt, and the creditors were constantly after us," Moses recalls. "We owed 1.2 million rupees (about \$26,000 USD), which seemed hopeless to repay. All our lives, we had been very religious Hindus, but we were receiving no help at all from our gods."

In desperation, Moses and Sarah concluded that their only solution was to commit suicide. "There seemed no other way to end our financial agony," Moses

explains. "So we agreed that I would bring poison home from work, and together we would end our lives."

But something amazing happened while Moses was away at work. Although the TV was on in the background as Sarah did some chores, she wasn't paying any attention until she heard a man talking about "a family that was deeply in debt." Sarah was astonished to hear the man continue by saying that even though the couple was planning suicide, God would do a miracle if they would give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Moses soon returned home, fully expecting to carry out their planned suicides. But Sarah now had other plans.

“When I returned from work, Sarah told me about the broadcast she’d seen and asked me to watch the rebroadcast of the program with her the next day,” Moses says. “She was convinced something wonderful was about to happen.”

The next morning, they sat and watched the program together.

“The preacher on TV said if we would pray to this God he was speaking about, we could have changed lives. So we prayed with him to invite Jesus Christ to come into our hearts!” Moses testifies.

The transformation began right away. “When we prayed to Jesus, we felt totally different,” he says.

“We had never experienced that kind of peace when we prayed to our gods. But suddenly we felt real hope that Jesus was going to give us a miracle so we wouldn’t have to kill ourselves.”

Moses and Sarah were so sure of their new faith that they immediately destroyed their Hindu idols. “We love Jesus!” they exclaim joyfully. “He has given us new lives, exactly like the preacher on TV said would happen.”

Not only did this Indian couple become new creations in Christ, but God also gave them a miracle to clear all of their debts. Their hopeless situation became a hope-filled future!

Visit inspiration.org/SarahMoses to watch Sarah and Moses share their exciting story!

**If you’re facing a desperate situation today,
remember what God did for Moses and Sarah.**



He’s the God of the impossible, and He can transform YOUR life today just as He transformed theirs. Contact our prayer ministers to pray with you for the miracle you need.

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Escaping the House of BONDAGE



Ben Cerullo



Is there some area of your life where you need to get unstuck? This month as we celebrate the Feast of Passover and Jesus' death and resurrection, it's the perfect time to receive God's favor for a new beginning. Whether you need freedom from an addiction, release from a toxic relationship, healing from some sickness, or rescue from financial lack, this can be your breakthrough month!

The first Passover marked the Israelites' deliverance from 430 years of captivity in Egypt. God's people were told to describe this event in simple but powerful terms: "By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 13:14).

For generations, the Israelites had suffered cruel oppression – but that was about to change in

sudden and dramatic fashion. God promised Moses:

*I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant... **I will bring you OUT** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God... And **I will bring you INTO** the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage (Exodus 6:5-8).*

Perhaps these great promises also apply to your life today. As you await your breakthrough,

maybe you need God to bring you OUT from under your burdens... to rescue you from some kind of bondage...to show you His supernatural redemption...and to bring you INTO your spiritual inheritance. That's exactly what He wants to do for you!

And never forget that during the first Passover feast, the Israelites weren't *just* released from slavery, as wonderful as that was. They also unexpectedly received great abundance when they "*stripped the Egyptians of their wealth*" (Exodus 12:35-38 NLT).

Although the Israelites had been robbed of their blessings for centuries, they left their captivity with unimaginable riches and prosperity. Instead of still being hard-pressed slaves with little to call their own, they were abundantly blessed with silver, gold, clothing, and livestock.

What an amazing turnaround! And it's a powerful illustration of God's desire to reverse *your* negative circumstances and bless you beyond your wildest dreams. Even if you have been in some kind of spiritual, financial, or relational captivity for a long time, your breakthrough can come with stunning speed.

FREED BY JESUS' BLOOD

During the first Passover, the Israelites sprinkled the blood of an unblemished lamb on the doorposts of their homes. This

protected them from the death angel that struck the Egyptians.

Do you see how beautifully this foreshadows what Jesus did for us on the cross? As God's spotless Passover Lamb, He shed His blood to purchase our salvation, protection, and favor. And just as Passover struck a devastating blow to the false gods of the Egyptians, the cross forever crippled Satan's evil kingdom: "*Having disarmed principalities and powers, [Christ] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it*" (Colossians 2:15).

As God delivered the Israelites from "*the house of bondage*" at Passover, He has delivered you and me from *our* bondage through the cross and resurrection of Jesus: "*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son*" (Colossians 1:13 ESV). Once again, God brought us OUT of slavery to sin so that He could bring us INTO the Promised Land of His Kingdom!

Friend, this is where your victory comes from. As you apply the blood of Jesus Christ by faith to the doorposts of your heart, you can forever end the accuser's right to torment you (Revelation 12:10-11). This month can be YOUR "appointed time" to take back what the enemy has stolen and escape from his bondage once and for all!



FAVOR

from a Facebook Video

Everything began to change for Valerie the day she watched an Inspiration Ministries video on receiving the favor of God.

No matter where you live, your faithful partnership with Inspiration Ministries is transforming the lives of people everywhere – in more than 200 nations!

As a recent widow living in India, Valerie was clinging to God's promises in the Bible that He would take care of widows and orphans. But her faith was severely tested. "After becoming a widow, I found myself without a place to live," she explains.

During this stressful time, she discovered Inspiration Ministries on Facebook and found hope and encouragement through David Cerullo's daily discipleship teachings.

Everything began to change for her the day she watched David's teaching on receiving God's favor. Sensing the Holy Spirit speaking to her, Valerie claimed the Lord's promises and placed her faith in Him as her Provider.

"While watching David Cerullo's message, I trusted God's favor to give me a breakthrough," she says. "Even in my distress, I felt in my heart that a breakthrough was coming through the Lord's favor. As a result, every fear disappeared!"

Valerie had been desperately praying for a suitable place to live, and her prayer was answered soon after she watched David's video.

"The very same day – just hours after I watched the video on God's favor – I received a phone call from my daughter, offering me a room in her home. In that moment, I knew that God was completely changing my circumstances!"

With gratitude, Valerie concludes, "God is a miracle-working God! Thanks to David's encouraging message, I'm confident that the Lord is showering me with His unmerited favor!"

If you're not already receiving David's life-changing discipleship videos, here's how you can connect!



"Like" us on Facebook
facebook.com/InspirationMinistries



"Follow" us on Twitter
twitter.com/InspirationMins



"Subscribe" to our YouTube
youtube.com/inspirationministries

A Merry Heart...

A merry heart does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22

Quiet in church...

A Sunday school teacher asked the children just before dismissing them to the church service, “Kids, why is it necessary for you to be quiet in church?”

Little Sally replied, “Because people may be sleeping!”

When the prodigal returned...

Sunday school teacher:

“Children, who was sad when the prodigal son returned?”

Child:

“The fatted calf!”



A Better Pastor...

An elderly woman was weeping as she said farewell to the man who had been pastor of her church for several years.

“Don’t be so upset,” consoled the departing pastor. “The bishop surely will send a much better pastor to replace me here.”

The woman wailed, **“That’s what they told us last time!”**

Sign on a convent wall...



The INSPIRATION devotional magazine is looking for examples of humor in the church or the Christian life. If you have humorous stories, jokes, or photos you would like to share, please write to MyStory@inspiration.org.



www.CuylerBlack.com

Need an Outburst of God's Favor?

During this season of the Feast of Passover, you can receive extraordinary blessings and breakthroughs as you honor God and claim His promises. Our THANK YOU GIFTS on *page 32* will stir your faith to receive supernatural favor you've never before experienced!

7 BLESSINGS OF PASSOVER

1. *An angel of God will be assigned to protect you and lead you to your miracles.*
2. *God will be an enemy to your enemies.*
3. *The Lord will prosper you.*
4. *God will take sickness away from you.*
5. *You will not die before your appointed time.*
6. *Increase and an inheritance will be yours.*
7. *What the enemy has stolen will be returned to you.*

Don't let Passover pass you by!

Take a step of faith today to claim God's special promises
(see David Cerullo's article on page 5).