

## **Bible study for this week** 4/13/09~4/19/09

\***April 13 (Monday), 2009** { [Romans 5:1-5](#) } Key: We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance. (Romans 5:3) "When The Pressure Is On" Bible In One Year: [1 Samuel 22-24; Luke 12:1-31](#)

What makes a shiny apple look so delicious? The skin, of course. But what is it about an apple that actually makes it delicious? The juice and substance inside. That's the apple's real "character."

I learned this as a boy watching my mom make applesauce. With a wooden pestle, she would mash the soft, boiled pieces of apple through a metal colander and into a bowl, until all that remained in the colander were drab, flattened skins. But oh, the sauce tasted so good!

God uses life's pressures to bring out the sweetness of Christlike character in us. Tribulation (which means "pressure" in the Greek) also helps us realize the awful potential of our sin nature and see it for what it is—ugly and tasteless. Under pressure, all kinds of sins begin to surface—greed, selfishness, lust, pride.

Pressure, whether from without or from an unrealistic perfectionism within, is a fact of our fallen world. God controls its intensity and duration so that we can recognize, confess, and renounce those fleshly "skins" that obscure Christ's character in us.

Tribulation is not something anyone seeks. But when it comes, the Holy Spirit will use it to create in us perseverance, character, and hope (Romans 5:3-4).

*Meditate:* All God's testings have a purpose—Someday you will see the light; All He asks is that you trust Him, Walk by faith and not by sight.

*Aphorism:* The gem of Christlike character is formed by pressure and refined by friction.

\***April 14 (Tuesday), 2009** { [Hebrews 9:11-28](#) } Key According to the law, almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. (Hebrews 9:22) "House Of Symbols" Bible In One Year: [1 Samuel 25-26; Luke 12:32-59](#)

Our neighbor was startled when two young men walked into her home uninvited. She screamed, and they ran out. Yet no one would accuse her of failing to be hospitable. If you enter someone's house, you come in on that person's terms.

We sometimes forget that the same principle applies to our entering into the presence of God. This was made clear in the Old Testament "house of symbols" known as the tabernacle (Exodus 25–27). Its construction and the arrangement of the objects within it teach us that we come into God's presence only on His conditions.

Consider, for example, the bronze altar of sacrifice (27:1-8). Bronze in Scripture stands for divine judgment of sin. The slaughtering of sheep and goats on the altar symbolized the results of sin. An unmerciful death for innocent animals pointed forward to a coming substitute, the sinless "Lamb of God." When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, His sacrifice was more than adequate to atone for the sin of all people (John 1:29). The only way to approach God is on His terms. We must receive the forgiveness He offers to us through Christ.

Have you accepted Jesus, the Lamb of God, as your Savior from sin?

*Meditate:* Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! Now ransomed from sin and a new work begun, Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son—Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!

*Aphorism:* Christ will receive you if you will believe Him.

**\*April 15 (Wednesday), 2009** { [2 Timothy 2:1-13](#) } Key: . . . walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work. (Colossians 1:10) "Supreme Motive" Bible In One Year: [1 Samuel 27-29](#); [Luke 13:1-22](#)

A first-grader beamed with satisfaction as he handed me a spelling test on which his teacher had written a large "100%—Good work!" The boy said, "I showed this to Mom and Dad because I knew it would please them." I could just see him riding home on the bus, hardly able to wait for the moment when his parents would express their excitement with how well he had done. His desire to make Mom and Dad happy was obviously a very important motivating factor in his life.

In 2 Timothy 2:3, Paul used the image of a soldier who serves with single-minded devotion to please his commanding officer. He wanted Timothy to know the supreme reason for serving God, even when the going gets tough. Wholehearted devotion, marked by hard work and careful attention to God's rules, brings the greatest glory to the Lord when it comes from a yielded and loving heart.

In His humanity, our Savior desired that the prospect of a cruel death and of becoming the sin-offering for mankind would pass from Him. Nevertheless He prayed, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). Jesus' supreme motive was a desire to please His Father. That should be our incentive too.

*Meditate:* In all I think and say and do, I long, O God, to honor You; But may my highest motive be To love the Christ who died for me.

*Aphorism:* Others see what we do, but God sees why we do it.

**\*April 16 (Thursday), 2009** { [Hebrews 12:1-16](#) } Key: O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Romans 7:24) "The Great Overcomer" Bible In One Year: [1 Samuel 30-31](#); [Luke 13:23-35](#)

Who is not inspired by the competitor who makes a comeback after being down and seemingly out of the running! The runner who stumbles while coming off the starting blocks but moves gradually into the lead stirs the imagination of us all. The team that can come from behind in the last moments to win excites us even more than the team that constantly wins by scoring big in the first part of the game.

Jesus made the most amazing comeback the world has ever seen. After being humiliated, insulted, spit upon, whipped, beaten, and nailed to a cross, His executioners claimed victory and declared Him dead. A military guard secured His tomb. How could anyone be more down and out than that?

Yet the struggle was not over; it was only the beginning. Three days later, He rose from the grave and reappeared as the victor over sin, death, and hell—a comeback like no other in all of history.

Are you feeling out of the running today? Have you stumbled badly? Think about Jesus' suffering. Ponder His resurrection. Ask Him to give you the victory. Just imagine what He has to offer you, no matter how far down you are now! No one has overcome like our Lord.

*Meditate:* The great example is our Lord Of overcoming power; The strength that brought Him from the grave Gives hope in life's dark hour.

*Aphorism:* Jesus died to save us and lives to keep us.

**\*April 17 (Friday), 2009** { [John 18:1-11](#) } Key: The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. (Genesis 2:8) "Two Gardens" Bible

In One Year: [2 Samuel 1-2; Luke 14:1-24](#)

Two gardens are mentioned prominently in the Bible: the garden of Eden and the garden of Gethsemane. God placed the first man, Adam, in the garden of Eden; Jesus went into Gethsemane to restore what the first man had lost.

The first Adam sinned in the garden; the last Adam took this sin upon Himself. The garden of Eden had the tree of life, which man could have enjoyed forever had he not broken fellowship with God. The garden of Gethsemane was a step toward the tree of death (Acts 5:30; 1 Peter 2:24). By Adam's transgression, he forfeited his right to the tree of life and brought death to all mankind. He who hung on the tree of Calvary conquered death and by His glorious resurrection restored the tree of life to all who believe.

The garden where Adam fell is gone from the earth, but there is a glad day coming when He who suffered alone in Gethsemane will restore all things. The curse will be lifted from the earth, the animals will again be docile (Isaiah 11:6-8), the deserts will disappear (Isaiah 35:6), the earth will yield her increase abundantly (Amos 9:13), and Jesus will be here personally to bless His people (Revelation 21:3). What Adam lost, Jesus will restore.

*Meditate:* Adam was God's first man in creation—He through sin brought death to all mankind; Jesus came to earth to bring salvation: Trusting Him, eternal life we'll find.

*Aphorism:* God formed us; sin deformed us; Christ transforms us.

\***April 18 (Saturday), 2009** { [Ephesians 6:5-9](#) } Key: Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. (Psalm 100:2) "Glad Service" Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 3-5; Luke 14:25-35](#)

As a boy, I never shared my father's enthusiasm for the soil. For several summers he had a little plot of ground in the country where he planted a garden. It provided physical therapy and relaxation for him, as well as a bountifully laden table for family and friends.

Back then, a hand-pushed plow was used to break up the ground, and the initial plowing, therefore, was often difficult. I remember helping my dad load his cultivator into the trunk one day and going with him to his garden. When we arrived, he prepared to make the first furrow while I took the lunch basket and picked a comfortable seat under the shade of an apple tree.

I was totally unsuspecting as I observed my father attach a rope to both handles of the cultivator and make a harness. Soon an unwilling boy was in front of that plow. Dad pushed and I pulled—and grumbled. Up one row and down another—over and over again. How miserable I was doing my duty!

Sometimes when we're asked to serve the Lord in a particular way, we reluctantly accept, but we do so only out of a sense of obligation. When that happens, we need to pray for a willing spirit so that we can "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).

*Meditate:* I am happy in the service of the King, I am happy, oh, so happy; Through the sunshine and the shadow I can sing, In the service of the King.

*Aphorism:* A willing spirit changes the drudgery of duty into a labor of love.

\***April 19 (Sunday), 2009** { [Psalm 34:11-22](#) } Key: The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart. (Psalm 34:18) "Keep A Low Profile" Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 6-8; Luke 15:1-10](#)

The National Weather Service advises that if you're ever caught out in the open during a severe lightning storm, you should kneel down, bend forward, and put your hands on your knees. Then, if lightning strikes nearby, your body will be less likely to serve as a conductor. Maximum safety depends on keeping a low physical profile.

The same applies to Christians caught in life's storms—we must assume a low spiritual posture. This means we must humble ourselves before the Lord (Psalm 34:18), because pride and rebellion can harden us. We must speak truthfully (v.13), depart from evil, do good, and seek peace (v.14). Our heavenly Father wants us to stay close to Him when our hearts are hurting so He can impart His renewing strength and healing love.

Yes, we'll get drenched in the driving rains of adversity, and sometimes its fierce winds will buffet us so severely that we'll almost be swept off our feet. With each blinding flash of lightning we may be strongly tempted to get up and run. But keeping a low spiritual profile of humility and fear of God is the surest and safest way to weather the storm. David assured us that those who trust God in life's storms will not be condemned (v.22).

*Meditate.* He that is down needs fear no fall, He that is low, no pride; He that is humble ever shall Have God to be his guide.

*Aphorism.* God doesn't shield us *from* life's storms; He shelters us *in* life's storms.