

Bible study for this week 6/22/09~6/28/09

***June22(Monday),2009**{ [Luke 12:13-34](#) }Key: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:34)“Millions!”Bible In One Year: [Esther 6-8; Acts 6](#)

The British film *Millions* tells the engaging story of two brothers who find a bag full of money with no apparent owner. The younger boy wants to use it to help the poor, while the older sibling sees it as his ticket to popularity and the good life. What unfolds is a story that vividly contrasts the freedom of a generous spirit with the frustration of a grasping hand.

In a sermon based on Genesis 3, my pastor said, “Our hands have been clenched from the fall.” Jesus’ teachings about faith and generosity seem deliberately intended to pry them open. He said, “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:32-34).

The words of our Lord may sound so radical that we find it difficult to figure out how to put them into practice. But if we honestly seek His guidance, He will guide our steps and guard our hearts from worry.

I suspect that the generous boy in that movie had open hands long before millions fell into them.

*Meditate.*One grace each child of God can show Is giving from a willing heart; Yet, if we wait till riches grow, It may be that we’ll never start.

*Aphorism.*There is more power in the open hand than in the clenched fist.

***June23(Tuesday),2009**{ [Job 41:1-11](#) }Key: God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves. (Genesis 1:21)“Giants Of The Deep”Bible In One Year: [Esther 9-10; Acts 7:1-21](#)

The blue whale is the largest animal that has ever lived. Some are 100 feet long and can weigh over 175 tons. The biggest one ever measured had a heart the size of a Volkswagen!

In Genesis we are told, “God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind” (1:21).

When the Creator revealed Himself to Job in his time of suffering, He used the giants of the deep, including the mysterious Leviathan, to illustrate His divine power, His unsearchable nature and incomparable character.

“Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of [Leviathan]? No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me? . . . Everything under heaven is Mine” (Job 41:9-11).

God uses the whale, the Leviathan, and all the giants of the deep to remind us of how awesome He is as Creator of the universe (Romans 1:20). The One who made creatures that cannot be controlled is Himself beyond our control and understanding.

Just as a frightening thunderstorm makes us stand in awe of the Creator, so should the blue whale. All of God’s creation points to His eternal power.

Meditate: Great is the Lord, He is holy and just; By His power we trust in His love. Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true; By His mercy He proves He is love.

*Aphorism.*Creation is filled with signs that point to the Creator.

***June24(Wednesday),2009**{ [Colossians 1:24-29](#) }Key: To this end I also labor, striving

according to His working which works in me mightily. (Colossians 1:29)“Dartboard Or Pipeline?”Bible In One Year: [Job 1-2; Acts 7:22-43](#)

One day during my devotional time, this thought came to my mind: “Don’t let life happen *to* you. Let life happen *through* you.”

The first phrase described me to a T, for I tended to see life as something coming at me. I felt like a worn-out dartboard. I was using all my energies to shield myself from the darts of life’s trials.

But the second phrase, “Let life happen *through* you,” presented a different approach. Instead of dodging life’s fiery darts, I was to let God’s life and love be channeled through me, blessing me on its way to blessing others.

I chose that day to become God’s pipeline instead of life’s dartboard. Then I could begin living more effectively for Him.

Some days I revert to being a dartboard, but I soon run out of the love and power to bless others. Then through confession, faith, and obedience, I reconnect myself to my heavenly supply center and resume pipeline living.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul mentioned the many troubles he was facing. Yet he was determined to be a channel of blessing by allowing God to work through him.

What about you? Are you a dartboard or a pipeline? It’s a challenge and a choice for every believer.

Meditate: Give as ’twas given to you in your need, Love as the Master loved you; Be to the helpless a helper indeed, Unto your mission be true.

Aphorism: God blesses you to bless others.

***June 25 (Thursday), 2009** { [Philippians 2:1-4; 4:1-3](#) } Key: Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (Philippians 2:2)“Tug-Of-War”Bible In One Year: [Job 3-4; Acts 7:44-60](#)

A college in our area has an interesting annual rite—a tug-of-war. Two teams train and prepare to pull together on their end of the rope to win the competition, hoping to avoid the mud-pit between the teams and gain campus bragging rights for another year. For a fun competition, it can become intense.

As believers in Jesus, we often face the challenge of learning how to pull together. Self-interest, personal agendas, and power struggles get in the way of genuine ministry and hinder the work of Christ.

Such was the case in Paul’s letter to the Philippians, where he had to plead with Euodia and Syntyche to “be of the same mind” (4:2). Their personal friction created a roadblock to their spiritual service, and their “tug-of-war” was harming the life of the church.

Paul’s appeal was for them to pull together and work for the honor of the Master. It is an appeal that serves us well today. When we feel distanced from our fellow believers, we must look for the common ground we have in the Savior.

Church is no place for a tug-of-war. It’s imperative that we work together for the advancement of God’s kingdom. He can use us in wonderful ways when we lay aside our personal differences and pull together on the rope.

Meditate: I pray, O Lord, reveal to me If I have caused disunity, For You would have Your children one In praise and love for Your dear Son.

Aphorism: A believer at war with another Christian cannot be at peace with the Father.

***June 26 (Friday), 2009** { [Psalm 107:23-32](#) } Key: He guides them to their desired haven. (Psalm 107:30)“Two Great Fears”Bible In One Year: [Job 5-7; Acts 8:1-25](#)

Psalm 107 tells of “those who go down to the sea in ships” (v.23). Along their journey at sea, they see God as the One behind the tempestuous storm and the One who calms it. In the world of sailing vessels there were two great fears. One fear was of a terrible gale, and the other was of having no wind at all.

In “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) describes tempests and doldrums at sea. Two lines have become household words: *Water, water everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.*

In doldrum latitudes, the wind dies down and a sailing ship remains stationary. Captain and crew are “stuck,” with no relief in sight. Eventually, with no wind, their water supply runs out.

Sometimes life demands that we weather a storm. At other times it puts us to the test of tedium. We may feel stuck. What we want most is just out of reach. But whether we find ourselves in a crisis of circumstance or in a place where the spiritual wind has been taken out of our sails, we need to trust God for guidance. The Lord, who is sovereign over changing circumstances, will eventually guide us to our desired haven (v.30).

Meditate. I will not fear the howling storms of doubt, Nor shudder when I feel I’m all alone; But I will trust my Savior as I shout: “The Lord’s my helper—He is on the throne!”

Aphorism. God orders our stops as well as our steps.

***June 27 (Saturday), 2009** { [2 Corinthians 10:3-6](#) } Key: [Bring] every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5) “Virus” Bible In One Year: [Job 8-10; Acts 8:26-40](#)

Some days my computer helps me fly like an eagle. Other times, it bogs me down like a hippopotamus. On “eagle days” I’m grateful for my computer. But there are those “hippo days” when I rue the day I bought one.

Recently I’ve had to contend with a virus that invaded my computer. What bothers me most is that viruses are created maliciously. Bright people who live with a darkness in their lives want to make other people miserable. What’s worse, I permitted the virus to enter my machine by opening what I thought was an innocent e-mail.

Sin resembles a computer virus. Satan wants to destroy Christians by infecting their minds. But the apostle Paul urged the believers at Corinth to bring “every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Just as we let a virus into our computers, we also let darkness into our lives when we open ourselves unthinkingly to the godless messages that permeate our culture. We let down our guard and hardly notice the sin that infects our minds.

But by confessing our sin, reading God’s Word, and praying, we build a firewall, or barrier, to safeguard our minds. With the help of the Spirit, we’ll keep our minds from becoming unwitting hosts for unwanted guests.

Meditate. Heavenly Father, I’m often careless with what I allow to enter my mind. By Your Spirit, please help me to guard my mind today. By Your grace, keep me from situations that wage war on my thought life. Amen.

Aphorism. Guard your thoughts as you would your wallet.

***June 28 (Sunday), 2009** { [Colossians 3:12-17](#) } Key: Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17) “Gratitude” Bible In One Year: [Job 11-13; Acts 9:1-21](#)

Among the first words many of us were taught to say are *please* and *thank you*. No one gets quite as excited as a parent or grandparent when a toddler first utters those words and makes the connection between asking politely and receiving gratefully.

But I suspect that as we grow older we become more adept at saying please than thank you, especially with our heavenly Father. We focus more on pressing needs than on previous provisions; we petition more than we praise. And while God invites us to come to Him with all our needs, He also urges us to make gratitude a habit.

In Colossians 3:15, Paul instructed every follower of Jesus Christ to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Then three times he reminded us to remain grateful to God: “be thankful” (v.15); sing with gratitude to the Lord (v.16); “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (v.17).

Dr. Michael Avery, president of God’s Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio, has said: “Very few things honor and glorify God more than the sweet fragrance of a thankful soul. It expels gloom and ushers in sweet peace and blessed hope. Gratitude encourages graciousness.” It’s good to give thanks to God.

Meditate: We thank You, Lord, for blessings You give us on our way; May we for these be grateful, And praise You every day.

Aphorism: Gratitude should be a continuous attitude, not just an occasional incident.