

Bible study for this week 7/20/09~7/26/09

***July 20 (Monday), 2009** { [Luke 22:39~46](#) } Key: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? (Psalm 22:1) "Our Suffering Savior" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 26~28; Acts 22](#)

It was late on the Thursday evening of Passover week. Jesus was with His disciples at one of His favorite retreats—the Garden of Gethsemane. In great emotional distress, He admonished the disciples to pray for strength to remain loyal to Him. He removed Himself a short distance from them and prayed, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

The "cup" from which Jesus asked to be delivered was not death. He came to die for us. I think the cup represents the frightful alienation from His Father that would lead to His cry on the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

In the garden, He must have been anticipating that time when His Father would turn His back on Him. The coming of the angel assured Him that He was not alone. Yet the reality of the Father's imminent withdrawal from Him was foremost in His thoughts. He would be taking our sin on Himself and enduring the awesome aloneness of the cross. This realization drove Jesus to pray with so much intensity that "His sweat became like great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44).

And what's even more amazing is the truth that Jesus endured this suffering for you and me!

Meditate: Thinking It Over Nothing deserves more quiet reflection than the time of Jesus' suffering just before His crucifixion.

Aphorism: The death of Christ is the measure of God's love for you.

***July 21 (Tuesday), 2009** { [Colossians 3:1~4](#) } Key: Our citizenship is in heaven. (Philippians 3:20) "The Far Side Of The World" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 29~30; Acts 23:1~15](#)

Patrick O'Brian (1914~2000) is a celebrated author of historic novels. In 1969 he published *Master And Commander: The Far Side Of The World*, a novel (later turned into a successful movie) about naval warfare during the Napoleonic War. One reason for this book's popularity is O'Brian's careful attention to navy lore and natural history with penetrating insights into human nature.

In one stirring scene, Captain "Lucky Jack" Aubrey prepares his crew for battle. He tells them: "England is under threat of invasion, and though we be on the far side of the world, this ship is our home. This ship is England."

Captain Aubrey's view of citizenship is based on loyalty, not location. And this conviction clearly illustrates a biblical principle. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, a Roman colony: "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).

It is important for us to be reminded that though we are living on this side of heaven for now, our eternal home is the place where our loyalty should lie. We need to "set [our] mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

Meditate: Beyond earth's sorrows, the joys of heaven; Beyond earth's shadows, a glorious dawn; Beyond earth's battles, sweet peace unending; Beyond earth's sunset is heaven's first morn.

Aphorism: As you mind your earthly duties, keep heaven in mind.

***July 22 (Wednesday), 2009** { [2 Timothy 3](#) } Key: In the last days perilous times will come.

(2 Timothy 3:1)“The Struggle”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 31~32; Acts 23:16~35](#)

Have you ever heard someone suggest that if you just trust Jesus, He’ll solve all your problems and you’ll float through life with riches and peace?

If that were the way God planned it for the people who serve Him, then what was Paul’s problem? After his conversion, he was as godly as they come, yet he had problems galore. He was one of the greatest missionaries of all time—and what did he get for his trouble? Beaten up. Arrested. Nearly drowned. Run out of town.

Look at Joseph, Abraham, Job, Jeremiah, Peter—godly men one and all. Yet they all faced dangers and trouble none of us would ever desire.

So, why the struggle? Why is it that tragedy strikes Christians with the same blunt force that it strikes the most antagonistic atheists? Why are we not exempt from natural disasters, serious illness, interpersonal squabbles, and mistreatment by others?

Somehow, in God’s way of making things work out, our troubles can advance His kingdom and purposes (Romans 8:28; Philippians 1:12). Our task is to glorify God, no matter what the circumstances. If we do, our struggle can direct others to the Savior as we make our way toward our ultimate goal of rest and reward in heaven.

Meditate: To make us good ambassadors God sends us trials along the way, But we become true conquerors When in life’s struggles we obey.

Aphorism:God allows trials in our lives not to impair us but to improve us.

***July23(Thursday),2009**{[Isaiah 6:1~8](#) }Key: I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8)“Whom Shall I Send?”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 33~34; Acts 24](#)

As a young pastor, I served a fledgling new congregation that included my parents. My father was very active in the church’s “people ministries”—evangelism, hospital and nursing-home visitation, bus ministry, relief for the poor, and more. Although he had never been formally trained in ministry, Dad had a natural ability to connect with people who were in the midst of hard times. That was his passion—the downtrodden people who are often overlooked. In fact, on the day he died, my last conversation with him was about someone he had promised to call on. He was concerned that his promise be kept.

I believe that my father’s service was one that followed the heart of Christ. Jesus looked out over the masses of the forgotten people of the world and felt compassion for them (Matthew 9:36~38). He commanded His followers to pray that the heavenly Father would send workers (like my dad) to reach those weighed down with the cares of life.

My father became the answer to those prayers in many hurting people’s lives, and we can as well. When the prayer goes out for someone to represent Christ’s love, may our heart respond: “Lord, here am I! Send me.”

Meditate:Take the task He gives you gladly, Let His work your pleasure be; Answer quickly when He calleth, “Here am I, send me, send me.”

Aphorism:True service is love in working clothes.

***July24(Friday),2009**{[Titus 1:1~9](#) }Key: Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls. (Proverbs 25:28)“Cupcake Self-Discipline”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 35~36; Acts 25](#)

An old adage says: “Next time you want a cupcake, eat a carrot.” The saying is good advice for dieters, but those who framed it may have had all of us in mind. By disciplining our desires when no moral principle is at stake, we prepare ourselves for those moments when we face a temptation to sin.

This kind of discipline is what Paul referred to when he used the term *self-controlled* in his list of qualifications for church leadership (Titus 1:8). We need this reminder today. Many people think they can live immorally now and suddenly stop when they want to. Because they do not consider the addictive power of sin, they find that living up to their good intentions is far more difficult than they had anticipated.

Proverbs 25:28 tells us that if we lack self-control we are as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls. Consistent self-discipline will build up our spiritual defense system against the forces of evil.

When we discipline ourselves to keep our ordinary desires under control, we make a habit of virtuous living and practice the reality of Paul's words in Romans 6:18, "Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Meditate: For Further Study Are you facing struggles in your walk with the Lord?

Aphorism: To gain self-control, give Christ control.

***July 25 (Saturday), 2009** { [Revelation 7:13~17](#) } Key: The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. (Revelation 7:17) "The Lamb Is Our Shepherd" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 37~39; Acts 26](#)

The book of Revelation gives us a marvelous picture. The Lamb of God leads us from one fountain of water to another, always deeper into the love of God (7:17).

Jesus prayed in the Upper Room shortly before He went to the cross: "I have declared to [the disciples] Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

Jesus leads us into an ever deeper knowledge of the love of God. His concern is not merely that we know about God, but that we know how deeply we're cherished and loved. As Jesus said, the love the Father has for the Son He also has for us.

But it's a process to comprehend that love. It takes time for God's love to take hold of us. Perhaps you're not sure that He loves you. Be patient. The Holy Spirit is at work guiding you into all truth (John 16:13). Read and meditate on His words and deeds in the Gospels. Ask Him to show you God's love. In time He will reveal its "width and length and depth and height" (Ephesians 3:18).

And if I understand it correctly, the process will go on throughout eternity. We will be completely satisfied in heaven, and yet we will continue growing, for there is no end to the love of God.

Meditate: O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure—The saints' and angels' song.

Aphorism: Our love has limits but God's love is boundless.

***July 26 (Sunday), 2009** { [Proverbs 30:1~9](#) } Key: Give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me. (Proverbs 30:8) "Prosperity And Adversity" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 40~42; Acts 27:1~26](#)

Prosperity and adversity are equal-opportunity destroyers. The extremes of life can be hazardous because a person with too much may encounter as much difficulty as one with too little.

Agur, the writer of Proverbs 30, must have sensed this danger when he prayed: "Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God" (Proverbs 30:8~9).

A similar request occurs in a beautiful choral anthem composed by Benjamin Harlan:
*Write Your blessed name, O Lord, upon my heart, There to remain so indelibly engraved
That no prosperity, nor adversity Shall remove me from Your love.*

In Proverbs 30 the focus is on circumstances, while the song centers on the state of our heart. Perhaps we should pray that God would guard us in both areas of our lives. The late Dr. Carlyle Marney, a prominent pastor, often said that most of us need to have our “wanter” fixed. Instead of always asking for more, we should seek the balance expressed in Proverbs 30.

Meditate: When we invite the Lord to place His mark of ownership on our lives, we acknowledge His wise and loving provision for all our needs.

Aphorism: Contentment is realizing that God has already given me all I need.