

## **Bible study for this week** 8/10/09~8/16/09

\***August 10(Monday),2009**{ [Matthew 16:13-20](#)}Key: Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”(Matthew 16:16)“**A Fragile Stone**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 79-80; Romans 11:1-18](#)

When writing on the life of Simon Peter, songwriter and author Michael Card described the apostle as “a fragile stone.” It is a term filled with contrast, yet one that aptly describes Peter.

Throughout Peter’s life, we see this contrast lived out as he displayed moments of courage followed by spiritual failure. After his declaration of Christ as the Son of God, Jesus said to him, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). A rock. A stone. Peter, whose name means “a small stone,” proved to be fragile when he tried to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross, and when he denied Him three times after His arrest.

Peter, the “fragile stone,” reminds us that no amount of personal strength or talent can make us adequate for this life and its challenges. Only as we rest in the strength of Christ will we find His provision. When we acknowledge our frailty and dependence on Him, Christ’s strength can empower us for the troubles life throws our way.

Like Peter, we are all “fragile stones.” How grateful we can be for His strength that is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

***Meditate:***God uses weakness to reveal,His great sufficiency;So if we let Him work through us,His power we will see.

***Aphorism:***Only when we acknowledge our weakness can we be strong in the Lord.

\***August 11(Tuesday),2009**{ [Psalm 94:16-23](#)}Key: In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul. (Psalm 94:19)“**Sustained In The Silence**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 81-83; Romans 11:19-36](#)

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was the founder of the China Inland Mission and a great servant of God. But after the ferocious Boxer Rebellion of 1900, in which hundreds of his fellow missionaries were killed, Taylor was emotionally devastated and his health began to fail. Nearing the end of life’s journey, he wrote, “I am so weak that I cannot work. I cannot read my Bible; I cannot even pray. I can only lie still in God’s arms like a child and trust.”

Have you been passing through a time when you are tired of body and sick of heart? Do you find it difficult to focus your mind on biblical promises? Has it become hard for you to pray? Don’t write yourself off as a spiritual castaway. You are joining a host of God’s people who have experienced the dark night of the soul.

When we endure such times, all we can do—indeed, all we *need* do—is lie still like a child in the arms of our heavenly Father. Words aren’t necessary. A comforting father doesn’t expect his child to make speeches. Neither does God. He knows we need His soothing care. In times of trouble, His mercy holds us up (Psalm 94:18). We may trust Him to carry us through that dark night of the soul and on into the dawning light.

**Meditate:** Under His wings I am safely abiding, Though the night deepens and tempests are wild; Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me, He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

**Aphorism:** When we have nothing left but God, we'll find that God is enough.

\***August 12 (Wednesday), 2009** { [Jeremiah 32:6-15](#) } Key: Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? (Jeremiah 32:27) "**All The Facts**" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 84-86; Romans 12](#)

The Babylonian armies had Jerusalem surrounded. Resistance was futile. Jeremiah the prophet had already warned the leaders that the city would fall. Now he languished in prison for prophesying the truth.

Just as invasion was imminent, the Lord informed Jeremiah that one of his cousins was on the way to ask him to buy a piece of family property. God commanded Jeremiah to fulfill his cousin's request (Jeremiah 32:7-8).

What a time to pay good silver for land that would soon be in the hands of the enemy! All the known facts argued against this purchase. But as Os Guinness reminds us: "All the known facts are not all the facts."

Although puzzled (v.25), Jeremiah trusted God and bought the property (v.9). The Lord assured him that despite the bleak outlook, the people would again own "houses and fields and vineyards" in the land (v.15).

We often go through trying times. Some believers endure persecution. Others attempt to rebuild their lives after natural disasters. Many live with disabilities and suffering, with little hope of recovery. The known facts are against them.

But God, who came down in the person of Jesus, is on our side. We have a hope that does not disappoint. The *known* facts are not *all* the facts.

**Meditate:** The Lord above has kept you safe, Yes, all throughout the night; Why, then, should you awake to fear, The things beyond your sight?

**Aphorism:** All we've seen of God's provision teaches us to trust Him for what is unseen. \***August 13 (Thursday), 2009** { [Psalm 69:29-36](#) } Key: I will praise the name of God with a song . . . . The humble shall see this and be glad. (Psalm 69:30,32) "**Be Glad!**" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 87-88; Romans 13](#)

A friend remembers :For several days after my husband and my brother sang a duet in church of "Be Ye Glad," I was unable to get the lyrics by Michael Blanchard out of my mind. But they're good words to get stuck on:

*Oh, be ye glad, oh, be ye glad! Every debt that you ever had has been paid up in full by the grace of the Lord. Be ye glad, be ye glad, be ye glad!*

Ancient Israel's beloved songwriter and king often wrote about gladness. In three consecutive songs, David spoke of being glad: Psalms 68:3; 69:32; 70:4. His lyrics assure us that it's not the rich or the powerful who have reason to be glad but those who are humble and right with God.

David expanded on this theme in another song: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. . . . Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" (32:1,11).

If you are feeling poor and powerless today, you can still be glad. You can have something of far more value: a debt-free relationship with God.

When we stop defending our own sinful ways and humbly acknowledge that God's ways are right, true gladness will spring forth in songs of glorious praise.

**Meditate:** We can rejoice, our debt's been paid; All of our sin on Christ was laid; He wants us now to live our days. In thankfulness and endless praise.

**Aphorism:** Joy is the result of a right relationship with God.

\***August 14(Friday),2009**{ [Mark 3:13-19](#)} Key: Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him. (Mark 3:14) "**Rosebud Potential**" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 89-90](#); [Romans 14](#)

A friend remembers :My wife and I adore miniature roses. Recently, we planted several bushes, but one did not survive. We returned it to the nursery and asked for an exchange. It was midsummer and the mini roses section was limited.

I looked at one that had a picture showing its potential when in full bloom. But the rose plant itself looked rather plain. My wife offered some good advice. "Don't look at the full blossoms. Look at how many healthy new rosebuds are starting to form."

Following her advice, we selected, brought home, planted, and tended the plant with the most rosebuds. In only a week, it had blossomed beautifully!

When our Lord chose His apostles, He selected imperfect men (Mark 3:13-19). One had a history of shady business practices, others had violent tempers. Yet Jesus looked not at their imperfections but at their potential.

Jesus uses the same approach with us. He loves us so much that He chose us despite our imperfections (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Through the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, He nurtures and transforms us into His glorious image (2 Corinthians 3:18). Next time you are with family, friends, and co-workers, don't focus on imperfections. Instead, look for rosebud potential.

**Meditate:** God, help us see in those we meet, The likeness of Christ's image there, And may those traits that are like His. Grow stronger from our love and care.

**Aphorism:** The Spirit develops in us the clear image of Christ.

\***August 15(Saturday),2009**{ [John 3:22-36](#)} Key: He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30) "**Behind The Scenes**" Bible In One Year: [Psalms 91-93](#); [Romans 15:1-13](#)

People around the world instantly recognize Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch from the children's TV show *Sesame Street*. But Carroll Spinney is not a well-known celebrity, even though he has brought both characters to life on the popular program since 1969. A skilled puppeteer, Spinney has been content to work behind the scenes.

I believe God calls every follower of Jesus to take a similar approach in making Him known to the world. John the Baptist told his listeners: "I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' . . . He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:28,30). John acknowledged that he was not the bridegroom, but only His friend (v.29).

Oswald Chambers reminds us: "Goodness and purity ought never to attract attention to themselves, they ought simply to be magnets to draw to Jesus Christ. A beautiful saint may be a hindrance if he does not present Jesus Christ but only what Christ has done for

him; he will leave the impression—‘What a fine character that man is!’—that is not being a true friend of the Bridegroom; I am increasing all the time, He is not.”

Jesus the Savior is onstage. We must be behind the scenes.

**Meditate:**When you share the Lord with others,See that He is on display;For the world to see Him clearly,We must not get in the way.

**Aphorism:**He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. —2 Corinthians 10:17

\***August 16(Sunday),2009**{[Romans 1:8-16](#)}Key: I am ready to preach the gospel to you. (Romans 1:15)“**Lessons From Mom**”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 94-96; Romans 15:14-33](#)

A friend remembers :Dementia was slowly taking Mom Cetas from us. And there was nothing my husband or I could do to keep her from slipping away.

In those difficult days, Mom taught us many lessons. She forgot how to do a number of things, but one of the things she did not forget was how to pray. Occasionally, someone would mention a problem they were having, and she’d stop right there to pray for the person’s need.

She also continued to talk to others about Jesus. Those who took care of her at the nursing home said that she often asked the other residents and workers if they knew Jesus as their Savior. She wanted them to be sure that their sins were forgiven and they were going to heaven.

When I think of these qualities in Mom, I think of Romans 1. The apostle Paul remembered the people in the Roman church “always in [his] prayers” (v.9). And he was “ready to preach the gospel” because, as he said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (vv.15-16).

As long as Mom Cetas was able, she kept looking to Jesus in prayer and telling others about Him. We all can learn from her example of boldness and trust in the Lord.

**Meditate:**If we with all our heart and soul,Devoutly love the Lord,We’ll talk of Him to those we meet.And share with them His Word.

**Aphorism:**Talking to Christ about others gives us the passion to talk to others about Christ.