

Bible study for this week 10/05/09~10/11/09

***October05(Monday),2009**{ [1 Corinthians 3:5~15](#) }Key: He who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward.(1 Corinthians 3:8) “Doing What We Can”Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 23~25; Philippians 1](#)

Sometimes we may get discouraged because what we’re doing for the Lord seems unsuccessful. The children in the Sunday school class we teach are restless and inattentive. The neighbors we’re trying to reach with the gospel are politely indifferent. The members of our own family are far from the Lord. The world we lift up to God in fervent intercession grows increasingly violent and anti-Christian. All of this can add up to deep soul-discouragement.

Listen to the words of a Salvadoran clergyman who was murdered for his fearless denunciation of violence and injustice. He wrote: “We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. . . . We cannot do everything, and there’s a sense of liberation in realizing that.” This attitude helps us to do small things and to leave “an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.”

That agrees with the apostle Paul’s encouragement to be faithful in our tasks and to wait on God who “gives the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6~7).

Don’t allow discouragement to cause you to quit. In God’s own time our work will bear fruit.

Meditate: Go, labor on, spend, and be spent, Thy joy to do Thy Father’s will; It is the way the Master went; Should not the servant tread it still?

Aphorism: You are a success in God’s kingdom if you are faithful where He has placed you.

***October06(Tuesday),2009**{ [Deuteronomy 33:26~29](#) }Key:Underneath are the everlasting arms. (Deuteronomy 33:27) “Freedom falls” Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 26~27; Philippians 2](#)

On August 27, 1960, US Air Force Captain Joseph Kittinger Jr. sat in a gondola suspended from a high-altitude balloon. When the balloon reached 102,800 feet above the surface of Earth (more than 19 miles), Kittinger jumped out. Four minutes and 36 seconds later his main parachute opened at 18,000 feet, but not before he had attained a velocity of 614 miles per hour! Kittinger carefully planned his record-setting descent.

In the spiritual realm, we’re more likely to find that life is filled with unexpected free falls. The loss of a loved one, a broken relationship, or a terminated job can make us feel as if we’re dropping into the unknown. For believers, there is a spiritual “parachute”—the loving arms of God.

Thousands of years ago, Moses wrote these words to the Israelites just before he died: “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27). The words “everlasting arms” refer to the protection and preservation of God’s people. Despite the stressful circumstances they would surely face, they could rest in the assurance of God’s watchful care.

Do you feel as if you’re in a free fall? Take heart. God’s loving arms are there to catch you.

Meditate: O the sweet unfailing refuge Of the everlasting arms; In their loving clasp enfolded Nothing worries or alarms.

Aphorism:With God behind you and His arms beneath you, you can face whatever lies ahead of you.

***October07(Wednesday),2009**{[Leviticus 23:37~43](#)}Key: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.(Psalm 46:1) “Our Refuge” Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 28~29; Philippians 3](#)

Most homes are built to keep its inhabitants safe from ill effects of the weather, but not the dwellings built for *Succoth*. During this Jewish holiday, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, worshipers live in dwellings made of leaves and branches. One requirement is that the stars must be visible through the “roof.”

Obviously, this dwelling provides little protection from inclement weather. And that’s the point. Living in this vulnerable shelter reminds the Jews of their dependency on God.

During the days of the prophet Isaiah, the people bragged about a very different kind of dwelling place; they had made lies their refuge and falsehood their hiding place (Isa. 28:15). Because of the Israelites’ dependence on ungodly things, the Lord said to them through the prophet, “Hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place” (v.17).

Succoth calls us to examine our lives to make sure that our security rests not on lies but on God’s truth. The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us that all of life is sustained by God’s goodness.

When we make truth our refuge, no storm can threaten us, for we can depend on God to sustain us.

Meditate:No storm can shake my inmost calm While to that refuge clinging; Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing?

Aphorism:God is a safe dwelling place in life’s storms.

***October08(Thursday),2009**{[Acts 4:23~31](#)}Key: When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken.(Acts 4:31) “When People Pray” Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 30~31; Phil 4](#)

Peter and John were in danger. The religious leaders in Jerusalem opposing the gospel had warned them to cease their missionary efforts (Acts 4:18). When the apostles reported this to the other believers, they immediately held a prayer meeting. What happened next is thrilling. The believers first praised God. Then they asked for boldness that they might continue the work. The results were dramatic. The house shook, and the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. They boldly witnessed, enjoyed spiritual unity, and gave unselfishly to those in need (vv.31~37).

I’ve never felt a building shake at a prayer meeting, but I have seen God’s power at work. When I’ve tried to help repair a broken marriage or a divided church, I’ve asked those involved to pray. Sometimes they refused. Other times, though, they mumbled carefully worded prayers. Those meetings failed.

But occasionally someone would pray in earnest. Almost immediately the atmosphere would change. Confession and forgiveness soon replaced charges and countercharges.

When we pray sincerely, praising God and seeking His glory, great things happen. Prayer must always come from the heart.

Meditate:Dissension’s fuse is easy to ignite— It fuels our anger, yet it dims the light; Help us, we pray, to humbly seek Your Name, And in pride’s place restore the Spirit’s flame.

Aphorism:Sincere intercession is the key to God’s intervention.

***October09(Friday),2009**{[Nehemiah 8:5~11](#)}Key: They read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) “The Scrabble Syndrome” Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 32~33; Colossians 1](#)

A contender at the 2005 World Scrabble Championship Finals in London said mathematics and a good memory are necessary to win, but not a good vocabulary. A *New York Times* journalist described the event as “a time when language divorced itself from meaning” because a champion may create a high score using obscure English words such as *zobo* and *ogive* without knowing their meaning.

All of us are susceptible to what might be called “The Scrabble Syndrome”—using words to win religious arguments without understanding and demonstrating their meaning. Bible verses can become weapons against those who disagree rather than life-altering truths to be lived.

During a critical period in Israel’s history, Ezra instructed the people and was assisted by others who “read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading” (Neh. 8:8). As the people grasped what they heard, they had a deep sense of sorrow for their sins, followed by a joyful response to God’s mercy (vv.9~11).

Biblical words divorced from meaning undermine our relationship with God and others. Understanding with obedience brings wisdom, repentance, and joy.

Meditate: God’s Word, when it is understood, Can keep us free from strife; And when obeyed, it brings us joy And nourishes our life.

Aphorism: Knowing God’s Word should result in obeying God’s Word.

***October10(Saturday),2009**{[Job 16:6~17](#)}Key: Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.(Job 14:1) “Suffering: How Do We Respond?” Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 34~36; Colossians 2](#)

Why is there suffering? You might ask that question when you hear of hurricanes, mudslides, earthquakes, and other disasters taking people’s lives. Job asked that question too.

Why is there so much pain in God’s world? Consider these reasons:

1. *We can’t escape the laws that govern our universe.* We need such things as gravity, weather, and fire to survive, but they can lead to tragedy (Matt. 5:45). Fire is good in your stove, but an out-of-control fire can kill.
2. *We are a social race.* Our lives are intertwined, so we sometimes suffer when the sin or foolishness of others spreads trouble (1 Cor. 12:26).
3. *Sin brought a curse on the earth and its people.* This curse includes disease and death (Gen. 3:15~24).
4. *Suffering awakens compassion.* Jesus told us to care for those who suffer in poverty. We are His partners in helping others (Luke 10:33~35).

As Job discovered, God’s world is a fallen place. When we see suffering, we can use it as an opportunity to serve God by helping others, to trust Him in spite of the difficulty, and to grow in our faith in Him.

When trouble hits, let our first reaction be to trust the Lord and care for the needs of others.

Meditate: For Further Study Wondering about the reason for your trials? Read the online booklet Why Would A Good God Allow Suffering?

Aphorism:Our response to suffering can either make us or break us.

***October 11(Sunday), 2009**{[Daniel 4:28~37](#)}Key: Those who walk in pride He is able to put down.(Daniel 4:37)“Empire Building”Bible In One Year: [Isaiah 37~38; Colossians](#)

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After being warned by Daniel about his pride, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was struck with insanity. The Lord restored his mind, but only after he spent 7 years in a field thinking he was a wild animal.

Nebuchadnezzar went from boasting, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for . . . the honor of my majesty?” (Dan. 4:30) to a humble prayer: “I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven” (v.37). He had repented of prideful empire building.

Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee expressed concern about empire building in the church today. He advised Christian leaders, “Don’t try to build a little empire of your church. I started out with that viewpoint, and I had never been more unhappy.” He encouraged them to “build into the lives of people” and leave the results to God.

When a church devotes undue energy to statistics, buildings, and programs, pride can enter in and the needs of God’s people can be forgotten.

Jesus never forgot the importance of individuals. He invested His time in 12 men (Mark 3:14). Paul disciplined Timothy who in turn disciplined others (2 Tim. 2:2). God’s kingdom grows when we invest in people.

Meditate: Churches grow when people pray And pastors preach the Word, When love for Christ seeks out the lost To win them to the Lord.

Aphorism:Poor is the church that values programs above people.