

Bible study for this week 11/23/09~11/29/09

***November23(Monday)2009** { [Colossians 2:6~7; 3:12~17](#) }Key: Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:17)“All About Gratitude”Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 20~21; James 5](#)

For centuries, people in many countries have held harvest festivals to celebrate the bounty of the land and the blessings of life. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln established a national holiday in the United States as “a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father.”

Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen thinks that most holidays have been corrupted by commercialism, while Thanksgiving Day has retained its intended purpose. He said, “This is a very rare day. It is wholly and entirely about gratitude.”

No matter what others do, we as followers of Christ have the privilege and responsibility to extend the spirit of thankfulness to every day of the year. Paul urged the Colossians to keep growing in Christ while overflowing with thankfulness (Col. 2:6~7). We are to do everything “in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (3:17).

Abraham Lincoln’s proclamation also declared that all our blessings “are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.”

This is a fitting day to express gratitude to God. And so is tomorrow, and every day that follows.

Meditate: Worthy is God of our worship, Worthy is He of our praise, Magnify Him with thanksgiving, Gladly our voices we raise.

Aphorism: The joy of living comes from a heart of thanksgiving.

***November24(Tuesday)2009**{ [Psalm 42](#) }Key: Lord, all my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You. (Psalm 38:9)“Not “Why?” But “Who?””Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 22~23; 1 Peter 1](#)”

A person who says shares :While appearing on a panel with other bereaved parents, I was surprised at how much I learned by listening. We were there to help a group of chaplains minister to the grieving, but we ended up learning from one another.

One mom, who had lost her infant daughter to meningitis, shared a simple truth that touched me. She related that as she tried to work through the huge question of “Why?” she spoke to her dad about it. He told her that a better question to ask is “Who?” He explained that she may never know why her daughter was taken so early, but the help she needed most would come from pursuing who God is in this tragic situation.

Think of what this means to us in our difficulties. When we face unexpected grief and ask “Who?” we get this answer: “The Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3). When we face a period of weakness, we discover that “the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer” (Ps. 18:2). When the ungodliness of this world seems overwhelming, we can know that the “God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20).

When “Why, God?” is on your heart, ask instead, “Who are You, God?” Then seek Him in His Word.

Meditate: Ask the cause anxiously and puzzled, all fear that grow from suspecting ; The answer is latent while reading herein: Although I wonder that he knows.

Aphorism: In the desert of grief God provides an oasis of grace.

***November25(Wednesday)2009**{ [Haggai 1:1~11](#) }Key: You eat, but do not have

enough; . . . you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.(Haggai 1:6) “Emptiness Without God” Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 24~26; 1 Peter 2](#)

A little bit of doggerel goes as follows: “A cheerful old bear at the zoo could always find something to do. When it bored him, you know, to walk to and fro, he reversed it and walked fro and to!” The writer apparently thought people could learn a lesson from the bear, for these creatures seem to be quite happy as long as they have enough food to eat and a few of their own kind around them.

This is not true of humans, however. The Israelites who had returned from Babylon discovered that man cannot find happiness when he lives only for himself. They ignored the fact that God’s temple had not been rebuilt, but gave themselves to the construction of fine houses and completely occupied themselves with materialistic things. Yet their harvests were poor, their clothing inadequate, and their wages did not keep pace with rising costs (Hag. 1:6). The prophet told them they were reaping a harvest of unhappiness because they were putting selfish pleasures first.

God has made us in His own image and for His glory. We can never find true joy until we obey Christ’s admonition to seek “first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Only then will we sow and reap abundantly, and eat and truly be filled.

Meditate: O the emptiness of life without the Savior! Nothing worldly here can truly satisfy; We can only reap a harvest that’s abundant, Serving Jesus as to self we daily die.

Aphorism: Selfish gratification will lead to spiritual stagnation.

***November 26 (Thursday) 2009** { [1 Corinthians 9:24~27](#) } Key: Say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” (Colossians 4:17) “The Finish Line” Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 27~29; 1 Peter 3](#)

A person who says shares :When I was in college, I ran on the cross-country team. In the final event of the season, the state’s small colleges competed against each other, with about 75 runners in the event. We ran the 5K course in the rain and mud on a cold November day.

As I neared the finish line, I spied a runner from one of the other schools just a short distance ahead of me. He became my goal. I ran as hard as I could and passed him just as I crossed the finish line. That last dash meant I finished 42nd, which seemed a lot better than 43rd! It meant our team finished one position higher in the final standings than the team represented by the runner I had beaten. The point? I didn’t give up—I ran all the way through the finish line.

This is probably what Paul had in mind as he wrote to Archippus, one of his young ministry protégés: “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it” (Col. 4:17). When we feel discouraged and want to quit, it’s good to remember that the Lord who entrusted us with the privilege of spiritual service will give us the grace and strength to carry out that service. Let us “run with endurance” (Heb. 12:1) so that we will receive the “imperishable crown” (1 Cor. 9:25).

Meditate: Run the straight race through God’s good grace, Lift up thine eyes and seek His face; Life with its way before us lies, Christ is the path and Christ the prize.

Aphorism: Running with patience is perseverance in the “long run.”

***November 27 (Friday) 2009** { [Revelation 22:7~17](#) } Key: Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me. (Revelation 22:12) “Come Quickly!” Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 30~32; 1 Peter 4](#)

As the year 2004 ended and 2005 began, the world suffered a series of catastrophes. Were they signs of Christ's second coming? Were they evidence of God's wrath, His judgment on mankind's sin? Or were they simply the upheaval of natural forces?

Whatever our way of explaining terrible events, we need to see them from the long-range viewpoint. Through the centuries such things have happened again and again. Not only that, but humans themselves have inflicted barbaric suffering and destruction on others.

Consider just one episode in the sweep of history, the fall of Rome in AD 455 as described by a church leader: "Our citizens have given up believing in the future, especially those living in the poorest parts of the city. They have no work, little food, and no opportunity to better their lives. In some quarters of the city, riots have broken out, but for the most part there is too much despair to riot. Surely Christ will hear our cries and come soon."

Natural disasters and man's inhumanity to man will continue unpredictably until Jesus returns. We long for that time when He comes again because He will make all things right.

Meditate: Jesus, we have much that we are thankful for. Yet we do long for the day when You will return to bring wickedness and disaster to an end, and to usher in Your reign of peace. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Amen.

Aphorism: As the world grows darker, the promised return of the Son grows brighter.

***November 28 (Saturday) 2009** { [Psalm 93](#) } Key: The floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. (Psalm 93:3) "Angry Floods" Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 33~34; 1 Peter 5](#)

Trouble comes our way, according to Psalm 93, in relentless waves that surge and pound against our souls and break upon them with furious force. "The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice," and they are deafening (v.3).

Yet above the tempest we hear the psalmist's refrain: "The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea" (v.4).

Indeed, "the Lord reigns"! He is clothed with majesty and strength. He sits as King, exalted higher than the waves that rise above us, deeper than their immeasurable depths, greater than their strongest surge. The storm is in His all-powerful hands: "The world is established, so that it cannot be moved," for His rule over it was established long ago (v.1). He rules the raging of the sea; the "wind and the sea obey Him" (Mark 4:37~41). He speaks and they are still.

The storm will not last forever. Yet, while it rages, you can cling to the Lord's promises of love and faithfulness, for His "testimonies are very sure" (Ps. 93:5). Waves of trouble and grief may sweep over you, but you will not be swept away. He "is able to keep you from stumbling" (Jude 24). Our Father in heaven is holding your hand.

Meditate: When overwhelmed with problems, When weak or tired or ill, When storms are fierce and raging Just hear His "Peace, be still."

Aphorism: When adversity is ready to strike us, then God is most ready to strengthen us.

***November 29 (Sunday) 2009** { [Psalm 30:4~12](#) } Key: Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. (Psalm 30:5) "Always Winter" Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 35~36; 2 Peter 1](#)

A person who says shares :Unlike some of my family—who can't wait to go downhill skiing—I don't look forward to winter. When the first snowflake falls, I immediately start calculating how many months of Michigan winter are left.

Imagine C. S. Lewis' fictional world of Narnia, where for a hundred years it was always winter. Cold, wet snow—with no hope of springtime ever arriving to wipe away the

memories of icy temperatures and piles of white stuff. But worst of all, in Narnia, Christmas never came. Always winter and never Christmas! To me, the best part of winter is the anticipation, excitement, and wonder of Christmas. Life is bleak when you have nothing to look forward to.

There are some whose souls are locked in winter. The hardness of life has frozen their hearts. Disappointed with life, they find that each day is filled with despair. "Weeping may endure for a night," the psalmist tells us, "but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). In the darkest times of our lives, God longs to turn our "mourning into dancing" (v.11).

David wrote, "In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul" (Ps. 94:19). If you cry out to God in the midst of your "winter," you can experience the joy of the Christ of Christmas today.

Meditate: Now none but Christ can satisfy, None other name for me; There's love and life and lasting joy, Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

Aphorism: Jesus can turn your sorrow into dancing.