

Bible study for this week 11/30/09~12/06/09

***November30(Monday)2009**{ [Ecclesiastes 3:1~8](#)}Key: To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)“Thankful For Seasons”Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 37~39; 2 Peter 2](#)

A person who says shares :I grew up on the West Coast of the US. The possibility of snow for Christmas was so remote that my mom would point to fog in the early morning as evidence that the holidays were just around the corner.

My wife and I now live in the Midwest. There’s a lot of snow when the yuletide season comes around. And I couldn’t be happier with four distinct seasons. But I don’t find that same response from many who have grown up in the Midwest. I find it amusing that they don’t share my appreciation for the wonderful cycles of change God has built into nature for our good.

In Ecclesiastes 3:1~8, Solomon acknowledged the cycles of life. He observed a time to sow and to reap, to weep and to laugh, to mourn and to dance, to gain and to lose, to keep silent and to speak, to love and to hate.

Just as God determines the weather, He also controls the cycles in our lives: “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1). Do we resist those seasons and complain about the “snowy” conditions on the horizon? Or do we trust God and thank Him for whatever He has planned for us?

Whatever our situation is today, we can be thankful for God’s seasons.

Meditate: Just as the winter turns to spring, Our lives have changing seasons too; So when a gloomy forecast comes, Remember—God has plans for you.

Aphorism: Rather than praying for a change in circumstances, pray for a change of heart.

***December01 (Tuesday),2009**{ [Philippians 2:1~11](#) }Key: Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.(Philippians 2:5)“*Christmas Spirit*”Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 40~41; 2 Peter 3](#)

How would you define “the Christmas spirit”? Would it be a friendly smile between strangers, the sound of familiar carols, a tree with twinkling lights in a sea of brightly wrapped packages, or just that good feeling you get this time of the year?

None of these elements captures the real meaning of the phrase. They represent feelings that may be a response to the commercialism that distorts the real spirit of Christmas.

J. I. Packer goes to the heart of this matter in his book *Knowing God*. He writes, “We talk glibly of the Christmas spirit, rarely meaning more by this than sentimental jollity It ought to mean the reproducing in human lives of the [temperament] of Him who for our sakes became poor, . . . the spirit of those who, like their Master, live their whole lives on the principle of making themselves poor—spending and being spent—to enrich their fellowmen, giving time, thought, care, and concern to do good to others . . . in whatever way there seems need.”

In Philippians 2, Paul described the God of heaven and earth as laying aside His divine glory and becoming our servant by dying on the cross for our sins. Then he urged us to duplicate that same mind of humble service to others. That’s the true Christmas spirit.

Meditate: If we look beyond the manger To the cross of Calvary, We will know the reason Christmas Brings such joy to you and me.

Aphorism: The spirit of Christmas giving should be seen in all our living.

***December02 (Wednesday),2009**{ [Psalm 19:7~14](#)}Key: He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice.(Deuteronomy 32:4)“*Not Fair*”Bible In One

Year: [Ezekiel 42~44; 1 John 1](#)

A person who says shares :When I was coaching high school freshman girls basketball in the fall of 2005, I was surprised at how many times I heard, “That’s not fair!”

The girls’ motivation seemed to depend on whether or not they thought what I asked them to do was fair. If I asked some girls to do a defensive drill while others shot free throws, I heard, “Not fair.” If I allowed one group to play offense longer than another group, I heard, “Not fair.”

So many situations in life shout, “Not fair!” I observe Christian couples who struggle to have babies while others are blessed with children and then abuse them. I look at families whose children are all alive and well, while I go through life without one of mine. I see friends who long to serve God but can’t because of health issues.

It’s then that I must go back to a basic truth. We are not the arbiters of fairness. God is, and He knows far more than we do about His plans and purposes. The question isn’t about fairness. In the end, it’s about trust in a faithful God who knows what He is doing. “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice” (Deut. 32:4).

Life will never look fair. But when we trust God, we always know that He is faithful.

Meditate: If you feel that blessings pass you by, And for you life seems a bit unfair, Just remember, Christ was born to die, And in His great salvation you can share.

Aphorism:Life is not always fair, but God is always faithful.

***December03 (Thursday),2009**{ [Acts 26:8~18](#)}Key: I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light.(Acts 26:17~18)“**The Moment I Knew**”Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 45~46; 1 John 2](#)

The lights dimmed on the platform as Tom Whittaker began to sing the words of “Mary, Did You Know?” The steady, quiet strumming of his guitar beautifully complemented his calm, deep voice. His wife, Gloria, says that the first time she heard him sing that song, she realized she was in love with him.

Many people who know Jesus as Savior can point to a specific moment when they suddenly grasped the extent of God’s amazing love for them. At that instant, they got it. Ray Boltz describes it in song: *The moment it happened, It was the moment I knew; It was like walking in the darkness When the light comes shining through.*

Paul had such a moment on the Damascus Road. His first encounter with Jesus transformed him from a fierce persecutor of Christians to the first great missionary. Spurred on by this eye-opening experience, Paul’s newfound love for the Savior compelled him to share the gospel with everyone he met (Acts 26).

Perhaps you know *about* Christ but have never trusted Him for salvation. John wrote, “We know that we have passed from death to life” (1 John 3:14). But that statement applies only to those who look to Jesus for forgiveness.

Because of God’s love, you too can “receive forgiveness of sins” through Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18) and be “born again” (John 3:3).

Meditate: The moment is now.

Aphorism:It’s one thing to know there is a God; it’s quite another to know the God who is.
***December04 (Friday),2009**{ [1 Corinthians 15:51~58](#)}Key: Our Savior Jesus Christ . . . abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:10)“**Scared To Death**”Bible In One Year: [Ezekiel 47~48; 1 John 3](#)

The opening line of a country song, “Sarabeth is scared to death . . .,” leads the listener into the fearful heart of a teenage girl who is diagnosed with cancer. The lyrics of “Skin

(Sarabeth)” expose the struggles she faces, not only with the disease and its treatment but also with the obvious evidence of her struggle—the loss of her hair (hence, the title). It is a touching song of triumph in the midst of tragedy, as Sarabeth deals with the understandable life-and-death fears that cancer brings.

The specter of death is faced by every human being. Yet, whether we face that reality with fear or with confidence is not dependent on having a good outlook or a positive attitude. The way we face death depends completely on whether or not we have a personal relationship with Jesus, who gave Himself to die so that death itself could be abolished.

Paul wrote to Timothy that our Savior was the One who “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10). The result is that even in the most disturbing times of life, we never need to be scared to death.

We can live confidently and filled with hope, because Jesus conquered death.

Meditate: Your love, O God, would spare no pain To conquer death and win; You sent Your only Son to die To rescue us from sin.

Aphorism: Because Christ is alive, we need not fear death.

*December05 (Saturday),2009{ [Psalm 112:4~9](#)}Key: His righteousness endures forever. (Psalm 112:9)“**Righteousness Endures Forever**”Bible In One Year: [Daniel 1~2; 1 John](#)

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A good deal of our unhappiness as we grow older is caused by our pining for the “good old days”—those times when we enjoyed health, wealth, position, or power. But the things of this world don’t last. They are vacillating, changeable, capricious. In time, they may be taken away from us and replaced with poverty, isolation, weakness, and pain.

When we realize that this world and everything in it is unstable and unpredictable, we are left longing for something that lasts. What is left?

The psalmist wrote, “[God’s] righteousness endures forever” (112:9). It is untouched and unharmed by time and circumstances. Nothing that happens in this world can take it away. It endures when life has stripped us of every other possession.

This righteousness is ours as we draw near to God through faith in Jesus Christ (see Rom. 1:17; 3:21~26). He is our rock and our salvation and the only source of true and lasting happiness. Psalm 112:1 says, “Blessed [happy] is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments.”

Delight in the Lord and in His Word, and you’ll find true happiness. He alone offers a righteousness that endures for all eternity.

Meditate: I love Your truth, O Lord, The Word which You have given; Its precepts shall my soul delight On earth as well as heaven.

Aphorism: Happiness is ours when we delight in the Lord.

*December06(Sunday),2009{ [Colossians 3:8~17](#)}Key: Put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. (Colossians 3:10)“**God’s Work Of Art**”Bible In One Year: [Daniel 3~4; 1 John 5](#)

Vincent Van Gogh bought a mirror and used his own likeness in many of his paintings. Rembrandt also used himself as a model, completing nearly 100 self-portraits. These artists had a good example, that of God Himself, who used His own likeness as the pattern for His crown jewel of creation (Gen. 1:27).

Henry Ward Beecher, the famous 19th~century clergyman, said, “Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.” In everything we create—works of art, music, literature, even our children—a bit of ourselves is revealed.

The same is true of God; each of us reveals a bit of Him. The image may be tarnished, but it's always there and is never beyond repair.

Superficial changes won't fix what's wrong with us, however. Clothes, cosmetics, and surgical procedures can make us look like everyone else, not like the unique masterpiece God designed each of us to be. We need a whole new "self" (Col. 3:10), one that is renewed in His image and dressed in the wardrobe of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering (v.12).

To improve your "self" image, put on the character of God and display His image in all its glory.

Meditate: O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art; Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

Aphorism: God's children should reflect their Father's likeness.