

Bible study for this week 12/07/09~12/13/09

***December07 (Monday),2009** { [Luke 2:25~35](#) } Key: Simeon . . . was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel.(Luke 2:25)“**Waiting For God**”Bible In One

Year: [Daniel 5~7](#); [2 John](#)

Author Henri Nouwen has observed that the first pages of Luke’s gospel are filled with people who were waiting: Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna were all waiting for the fulfillment of a promise from God. But instead of passively waiting, they were actively looking to the Lord each day, what Nouwen calls being “present to the moment.”

Simeon, for example, was controlled not by hopelessness but by the Spirit who prompted him to go into the temple. His words of praise when he saw the child Jesus, the promised Messiah, resound as an example of patient hope in God: “My eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:30~32).

Many of us find ourselves waiting on God for an answer to a prayer or the fulfillment of a promise. His word comes to us, just as it did to those who were swept up in the events that marked the first Christmas: “Do not be afraid, Zacharias” (1:13); “Do not be afraid, Mary” (1:30); “Do not be afraid, [shepherds]” (2:10).

As we listen to God in His Word and obey Him, we’ll discover His goodness and power as we wait.

Meditate: Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest; Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Aphorism: Time spent “waiting on God” is never wasted.

***December08 (Tuesday),2009** { [2 Timothy 2:1~4,24~25](#) } Key: Be gentle . . . , in humility correcting those who are in opposition.(2 Timothy 2:24~25)“**A Knightly Soldier**”Bible In One Year: [Daniel 8~10](#); [3 John](#)

Before he enlisted in the Union Army to fight during the US Civil War, Joshua Chamberlain was a quiet and unassuming college professor. In the crucible of military combat he distinguished himself for his heroism in holding the line on Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg. He was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

To recognize Chamberlain’s contribution to the Union victory, General Ulysses S. Grant designated him to receive the first flag of surrender at Appomattox Courthouse. The defeated troops of the South expected to be ridiculed and humiliated. Instead, Chamberlain showed them kindness and respect. For this, the Confederate commanding officer wrote in his memoirs that Chamberlain was “one of the knightliest soldiers of the Federal Army.”

As a committed Christian, Chamberlain reflected the grace of Christ. We too need to stand for what we believe but also to be kind to those with whom we disagree. Paul exhorted Timothy, “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ . . . be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition” (2 Tim. 2:3,24~25). In conflict and in reconciliation, our response should reflect the gracious heart of a knightly soldier of Christ.

Meditate: Oh, to be like Him, tender and kind, Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind; More like Jesus, day after day, Filled with His Spirit now and always.

Aphorism: There is nothing so kingly as kindness; there is nothing so royal as truth.

***December09 (Wednesday),2009** { [Psalm 102:3~12](#) } Key: As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people. (Psalm 125:2)“**The Maker Of**

Mountains”Bible In One Year: [Daniel 11~12; Jude](#)

The Bible uses vivid imagery to express the brevity of our life on earth. Job said that his days were “swifter than a runner” and “they pass by like swift ships” (Job 9:25~26).

I recall preaching at the funeral service of a young mother. From where I stood I could see the Rocky Mountains towering over the western horizon. The scene prompted me to consider how I will one day follow that friend through the valley of the shadow of death, and yet those peaks will still be thrusting themselves skyward. Eventually they will crumble into dust, but the God who made them will exist forever in undiminished glory. I also remember thinking that my deceased friend and I will, by God’s grace, live with Him forever and ever.

Whenever we are troubled by the shortness of life and the impermanence of everything in this world, let’s remember the Maker of the mountains. He has always been and will always be. As the psalmist said, “You, O Lord, shall endure forever” (102:12).

That truth inspires us with hope. If by faith we belong to Jesus Christ the Savior, who is from everlasting to everlasting, we will one day rejoice in heaven in unending praise to Him.

Meditate: Immortal, invisible, God only wise, In light inaccessible hid from our eyes; Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, Almighty, victorious, Thy great Name we praise.

Aphorism: To see God’s hand in everything makes life a great adventure.

***December 10 (Thursday), 2009** { [James 1:1~8](#) } Key: If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:14) “**Praying Sheep**” Bible In One Year: [Hosea 1~4; Revelation 1](#)

Two children dressed as sheep in the Christmas play at Kaw Prairie Community Church in De Soto, Missouri, had a special part. Whenever Murphy, the main character in the play, encountered a problem, the sheep (Maria and Luke) came on stage to offer a reminder of what he needed to do. One carried the sign: “Just.” The other carried the sign: “Pray.”

We’ve all been faced with situations when we didn’t know what to do, or there was nothing we could do. When we’re distressed, we probably don’t want to hear someone flippantly say, “Just pray!” That answer seems too simplistic and can even feel hurtful if it’s said unthinkingly.

But the simple answer “Just pray” is exactly what we need to do. During the days of the early church, James wrote to believers who were going through trials—difficulties that most of us know nothing about: stonings, imprisonment, and beatings for their faith. He told them to ask God for the wisdom and comfort to withstand those trials: “Let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (1:5).

When you encounter a problem, remember the simple instructions of the “Just Pray” sheep and talk to God about it. He’ll give you what you need.

Meditate: When with expectancy we pray According to God’s will, We’ll see Him working in our lives His purpose to fulfill.

Aphorism: No request is too great or too small to bring to God.

***December 11 (Thursday), 2009** { [Hebrews 8:6~13](#) } Key: Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. (Hebrews 8:12) “**Does God Forget?**” Bible In One Year: [Hosea 5~8; Revelation 2](#)

God longs to forgive sinners! But in the minds of many people, this thought seems too good to be true. Countless sermons have been preached to convince guilt-ridden

individuals that it *is* true. Many of these sermons emphasize that God not only forgives the sinner but also forgets the sin. I've often said it myself, never doubting its soundness.

Then one Sunday I heard a sermon that revolutionized my thinking. The speaker caught my attention when he said, "The idea that God forgets my sins isn't very reassuring to me. After all, what if He suddenly remembered? In any case, only imperfection can forget, and God is perfect."

As I was questioning the biblical basis for such statements, the pastor read Hebrews 8:12, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Then he said, "God doesn't say He'll forget our sins—He says He'll remember them no more! His promise not to remember them ever again is stronger than saying He'll forget them. Now that reassures me!"

Do you worry that there are certain sins you'll be punished for someday? Because Christ died for all our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), God promises to forgive us and never bring up our sin again (Ps. 103:12).

Meditate: God, whose every way is perfect, Said in justice and in grace That our sins He'll not remember, And our fears He will erase.

Aphorism: To enjoy the future, accept God's forgiveness for the past.

***December 12 (Saturday), 2009** { [Galatians 3:26–4:7](#) } Key: When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law. (Galatians 4:4) "**God Intrudes**" Bible In One Year: [Hosea 9–11; Revelation 3](#)

During this Christmas season, it's good to keep a firm grip on the reality of Easter. While the two events are celebrated at different times and in very different ways, they are both integral parts of God's initiative in His grand plan of salvation.

Peter Larson wrote: "Despite our efforts to keep Him out, God intrudes. The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin's womb and an empty tomb. Jesus entered our world through a door marked 'No Entrance' and left through a door marked 'No Exit.'"

James Edwards echoes this theme in his book *The Divine Intruder*: "[God] breaks into this world, even when He is unexpected and unwelcome. God joins us in our weakest and worst moments. There is a Divine Intruder among us."

The stable in Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary remind us that "when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son . . . to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4–5).

The Lord did not wait for an invitation to enter our world. Clothed with humanity, He lived as our teacher, died as our sacrifice, and rose from the grave as our Savior. Christmas is coming—and so is Easter.

Meditate: This joyous season of the year Should prompt us to recall That Jesus' death on Calvary Provides new life for all.

Aphorism: Jesus' earthly life is framed by two impossibilities: a virgin's womb and an empty tomb.

***December 13 (Sunday), 2009** { [Luke 12:13–21](#) } Key: The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness. (1 Timothy 6:10) "**Money Talks**" Bible In One Year: [Hosea 12–14; Revelation 4](#)

As I was driving home from the office, I saw a minivan proudly displaying a bumper sticker that read: "Money Talks: Mine Says Goodbye." I think a lot of people can relate to that sentiment.

Much of our living is spent acquiring and using money, which doesn't last. The stock market crashes. Prices go up. Thieves steal others' goods. Things wear out and break down, requiring the acquisition and expenditure of more money to replace what has been lost. The temporary nature of material wealth makes it a poor bargain in the search for security in an insecure world. Money is much better at saying goodbye than it is at sticking around.

Nowhere does the Bible say it's wrong to have money or the things that money can buy. Where we lose our way is when money becomes the driving purpose of our lives. Like the rich man and his barns (Luke 12:13~21), we end up pursuing the accumulation of things that eventually will be forfeited—if not in life, then certainly at death.

How tragic to live our entire lives, only to end them with nothing of eternal worth to show for our labors. To paraphrase Jesus' words, it is much better to be rich toward God than to work for treasure that can't last (v.21).

Meditate: Let me hold lightly things of this earth; Transient treasures, what are they worth? Moths can corrupt them, rust can decay; All their bright beauty fades in a day.

Aphorism: Treasures in heaven are laid up as treasures on earth are laid down.