

(For Monday, January 23, 2017) **How will your witness influence others who come after you?**

“Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’” (Is. 44:28 – ESV)

Isaiah’s prophetic power permeates this verse, where the Prophet actually names the Monarch who would end the Babylonian Captivity and enable the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem some 200 years later. Josephus writes of how Cyrus was so impacted by this Jewish Prophet’s words that the Persian King went to great lengths to fulfill the prophecies which Isaiah wrote about him (See *Jewish Antiquities* 11:5-7) Isaiah’s Messianic prophecies would inspire the conversion of the powerful Court Official in the Ethiopian Empire some 700 years into the future, impacting the lives of countless people in the history of salvation (See Acts 8:26-40 quoting Is.53:7-8) There is a timeless power in faithfulness to God which extends beyond our present lifetime. The great Saints we encounter in this life impact the way we teach our children and those who come after us.

What kind of impact will your Christian testimony have on posterity?

(For Tuesday, January 24, 2017) **Are you taking full advantage of God’s blessings?**

“They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and the water gushed out.” (Is.48:21)

Isaiah recounts not just the past faithfulness of God’s care for his children in their wandering through Sinai. Here Isaiah also describes the future redemptive act, when Nehemiah will lead the faithful back to Jerusalem to reestablish the Kingdom. How God has acted in the past does not change as we go into our future. His tender mercy is forever upon those who fear Him. (Ps.103:17; Lk1:50) And did you notice the abundant richness of God’s blessing? This isn’t a paltry trickle of water that God provides for just sustaining his people in their time of thirst. No indeed. God splits open the rock and brings forth a gusher so that His people can marinate themselves in the refreshment of his living water. This is no God of half-measures!

Are you getting the full blessing of what God longs to give you? Because if you’ll let him, he’ll teach you to drink from a fire-hose!

(For Wednesday, January 25, 2017) **How will you grow today?**

“They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.” (Is.49:10 – ESV)

It must have been amazing to stroll with The Lord in the cool of the evening. To dwell in a place where there is no death; where our every need is met, our prosper secure. But, then there was that snake and that apple. So, for a time, we live in a world of our own making. And broken humanity just isn’t up to the task of finding the way back to The Garden. At least, not alone. But, God hasn’t gone anywhere. No, he’s not going to wave his magic wand and transform us into perfection...at least not yet. We still have some things to learn, some growing to do. But He **does** promise to be with us in our pain. And in a moment of His choosing, in that very perfect moment when we are truly ready to be His, He’ll take us home.

Meanwhile we’ve all got some growing-up to do.

(For Thursday, January 26, 2017) **What's your face-time been like with The Lord recently?**

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;" (Is.49:15-16a)

There is a dimension to God's love that seems to defy our earthly role-models. Yes, we call Him "Our Father in heaven." But there is also a quality in God's love that is supremely and tenderly maternal. Jesus himself laments about the fact of how often He has longed to gather his people to him and care for them like a mother hen gathers her chicks. (See Mt.23:37; Lk.13:34) And His love goes even farther. It was etched by bloody nails into the very palms of his hands. How could a God who loves us **that** much ever be truly far from us? If you've felt distant from God lately, isn't it time you called out to Him? My experience is that He's always right there, waiting...just waiting for his child's call.

So, isn't it time you phoned home? Besides, the call's free! ☺

(For Friday, January 27, 2016) **Is God calling you to a firmer trust in His grace?**

"Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God."
(Is.50:10b – ESV)

If being a Saint were easy, anybody could do it. But where's the glory in that? God's faithful do find that eventually they walk not just through the valley of the shadow of death, but through a land of ever-flowing springs as well. (See Is.58:11) And it's true that those who walk with Jesus invariably find their burdened light, since He has shouldered the pain and condemnation for us. (See Mt. 11:30; Is.53:4) But we still have a journey to make, and sometimes that pilgrimage takes us through some pretty dark regions. But how else is God supposed to strengthen the faith of His children, except to prove how much He loves us in our times of greatest pain and challenge? Nobody ever learned to swim by sticking to the wading-pool. And it's inevitably in the roughest waters of life where the greatest lessons are learned.

How's God calling you to depend more on his grace and mercy?