

(For Monday, March 13, 2017) **How will God reveal himself to you today through his Word?**

*“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Jeremiah, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘I see an almond branch.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.’ ” (Jer. 1:11-12-ESV)*

We used to have a forsythia bush in our yard, next to the garage. Every morning early in the year, I took a few seconds to see if the branches were budding, since this plant is often the very first to flower in the Spring. Similarly, in the part of the world where Scripture was first written, the almond tree was considered to be the plant most likely to flower first. God tells the Prophet Jeremiah that his Word is the same way; that He is even now “watching over his Word” ready to perform its promise. For me, He is telling us here that there is something brand new, just waiting to be applied to our lives every time we open our Bibles.

What new wonders is God itching to perform in your life today though His Word?

(For Tuesday, March 14, 2017) **Do you recognize your “strong deliverer”?**

**“From the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock which is higher than I.” (Ps. 62:2)**

At the beginning of *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis describes pain as God’s “megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” The Psalmist clearly understands this. “From the end of the world” could easily be “at my wits end,” or “falling to pieces.” Not all pain is meant to bring us closer to God. Sometimes, stuff just happens. But every adversity we face can indeed bring the Kingdom of Heaven nearer, since our faith in Christ Jesus grows each time we are delivered from some impending disaster – as long as we can actually recognize our “strong deliverer.” (Ps.140:7) In order to actually be in a place of refuge, a “high rock” above the raging waters, you need to have realized that such a place is “higher than I.” We need to come to the realization that the help God offers is so much greater than our own human capacity can provide. And that requires some serious humbling.

What about you? Have you come to the “rock that is higher than I”?

(For Wednesday, March 15, 2017) **Are you walking in The Way?**

*“Although they [those who sin] know the just decree of God that all who practice such things deserve death, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. Therefore, you are without excuse, every one of you who passes judgment. For by the standard by which you judge another you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the very same things.” (Rom.1:32-2:3-ESV)*

Paul, and his dear friend Luke coined the term “The Way” (*hodos* in Greek) to describe the manner of life practiced by the followers of Jesus. In the above verses from Romans, Paul describes two manners of living which are very much of this world and not of God. He reminds us that some egregious sinners not only live in debauched abandon, but also condone this behavior in others. Yet another equally destructive manner of life is to constantly judge others as being wanting, even though we are told clearly that we ALL fall short of God’s glory. (Rom.3:23) “The Way” of the Christian is a different manner of life that does not condone sin, but instead encourages others to a life of redeemed fulfillment, while recognizing each time we witness man’s fallenness that “there too but for the grace of God go I.”

In how you live your life, which path are you on?

(For Thursday, March 16, 2017) **Have you taken full inventory of your life in Christ?**

*“Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (Jn.5:24-ESV)*

The ESV Study Bible footnotes regarding this verse declare it “one of the most striking statements in John.” And it surely is! The intent of the Evangelist is clearly to affirm that those who have accepted the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior have **already** passed from death to life. This is a state-of-being that is available to the redeemed in the here-and-now, and not something we have to wait for in the next life. Part of the difficulty in wrapping our minds around this concept may have to do with our understanding of the Greek word *‘iohniōh’* which means something with neither beginning nor end. But for me, a more profound translation of the Greek might be “limitless” rather than “eternal.” Because not only is this life we all share in our union with The Christ everlasting, it is also boundless in joy, and love, and fulfillment.

So how are you doing with exploring the limitless freedom, and joy, and completeness of your own “limitless life”?

(For Friday, March 17, 2017) **Do you read the Bible with someone else’s perception?**

*“How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?” (Jn.5:44-ESV)*

At seminary, one of my professors declared that, “If you believe you have come to a perfect and complete understanding of any verse in the Bible, then you’ve obviously missed something.” Now, that’s certainly **NOT** a justification for rejecting God’s truth as presented in the Bible! But John 5:44 indicates that nobody has ever rendered perfect witness to the limitless power and perfect righteousness of God except Jesus, his only begotten Son. So if you find yourself in perfect accord with anybody else’s perception of God, then someone (either you or the person close to you) is delivering a truth about God which is incomplete. To have questions about God is not only acceptable among believers, it is actually essential. Perhaps that’s why Paul tells us to ‘test everything; hold fast what is good.’ (1Thes.5:11)

Are you sifting the Holy Scriptures with enough personal attention in order to receive the full message of saving love that God longs to give specifically to you as his much-loved child?