

Around the Word Devotions + the week of March 29-April 4, 2020

THEME OF THE WEEK: He Suffered the Enmity of Unbelievers

When fears assail us, our flesh reacts out of self-defense and self-preservation. This is the world's way. The ends justify the means and undoubtedly more pain is the result. Yet, when humanity comes into contact, by grace, with God's Way, with the Savior, it's the opposite. Jesus did not strive for self-preservation or self-defense. Instead, He abandoned Himself out of pure Divine love. Heavenly love shows up at the cross. The world's way is centered on self, but there is the new Way. Heaven comes to earth in our Lord Jesus. God is not focused on self, but on the neighbor. He lives for another purpose, mercy and forgiveness. *O Lord, keep us in You and reveal to us the enemy of the sinful self. Amen.*

SUN

SCRIPTURE: John 8:46-59 Jesus is Savior

Many of the people in Jesus' day resisted His true identity, especially those with religious position and influence. Instead of trusting Christ, they accused Him. Rather than learning from Jesus, they sought to kill Him. Today, apart from faith, many cannot see that Jesus' true identity is God eternal, Son of God and Son of man. Sadly, those who need Him most are still hostile toward Him, and often miss the simple truth. God the Father has glorified Jesus for the purpose of saving sinners. *Father, break our pride and reveal Jesus as Savior. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 54 Trust in God

Every person experiences feelings of betrayal. Expectations of others often go without fulfillment. The actions of even trusted leaders can at times shock and bewilder us. In Psalm 54, David hides in the wilderness of Ziph from His attacker, King Saul. But the Ziphites betray him to try and gain Saul's favor. This reminds us not to place our trust in men. But like the Psalm says, especially in times of betrayal, "God is our helper...His eye has looked in triumph over our enemies." *Lord, help us recall Your faithfulness, forever and ever. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 9:11-15 Jesus in our Intercessor

So many live with a burdened conscience, trying to live as their own intercessor between themselves and God. Many struggle in vain to gain favor with God simply by extraordinary effort and care. All the while, Jesus alone is our Great High Priest. He has purified our consciences before God through His sacrifice on the cross. He has redeemed us and blessed us with an eternal inheritance in the heavens. We cannot redeem or intercede for ourselves. *O Lord Jesus, show us again that by Your sacrifice You have conquered our guilty consciences forever. In Your holy Name, Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-3 God Never Leaves Us

Life can be filled with uncertainty. For Abram (Abraham) and many today, God calls us to leave our home. Yet, in Christ we are assured that we are never without God's blessings and care. Some days the call to leave home is temporary, a hospital stay, a simple 9 to 5'er workday or maybe even a more permanent move to a new town. When the call comes, in faith we load up again, sure that like in Abram's life, God will never leave us. *Lord Jesus, go with us, ease our discontentment and bless others through our love, we pray. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:32-42 Truth in Christ

When God's Truth, Christ, is present, division is often the result. There's no problem with the Truth. Rather, sin and dishonesty seek divisions in order to hide. God's servants, Christians that believe God's Word is Truth, often find themselves suffering like the prophets of old or watching as the Truth brings division. Take heart, God's forgiveness is at work through His Truth as the Law leads people to repentance and the Gospel to grace. *Lord Jesus, remind us that Your Light shines in the darkness. It's the darkness that fails to understand. Your Truth is present to bless and not curse. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 1:21-31 God's Wisdom

Certainly nothing about God is foolish! But the apostle uses this comparison rhetorically to make sure his point is crystal clear. What the world calls wisdom is foolishness to God and what is God's wisdom, to the world, the death of Christ for sinners, is seen as foolishness apart from faith. God has chosen the simple and lowly things to bring His great gifts; His Word combined with bread, wine, and water. These basic things, when combined with God's Promises give righteousness, sanctification and redemption! *Lord help us to gain heavenly wisdom through Your gifts which the world calls foolishness. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 27 Salvation God's Way

When life is difficult we often hear folks say, "Why doesn't God, if He is good (sarcasm), fix the world and take away all trouble?" These doubters don't care about the collateral damage inflicted on Christ's dear people. God has fixed things! His way is to show love and care to all (1Timothy 2:4). Mankind's "fixing," as they imagine it, would undoubtedly mean war and more unnecessary bloodshed. God has a better Way! God's solution is to sacrifice His Son to bring life & salvation to all. *Teach us Your way O Lord, lead us on a level path (Psalm 27:11). Amen.*

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