

Walking in Christ's Light

Daily Prayer Journal

January 24 – January 29

*Growing our souls is a partnership with Christ.
To enable your soul's growth, use this material with Christ as your guide.*

Next Week's Sermon

Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:18-31 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=i+corinthians+1:18-31)

Theme: The love of Christ is foolishness

Question: Can I believe in Jesus as he is presented in the Gospel?

MONDAY **1-24-11**

Read: Matthew 5:3-12 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=matthew+5:3-12)

Prayer: God, it seems as if the rich are the luckiest, but you say the “poor in spirit” are blessed. We long for happiness, but you say those who mourn are blessed. We are taught that nice guys finish last, but you say “blessed are the meek.” You challenge us with your words, and confound us with your teachings. Give us the eyes to see how blessed life can be if we follow your difficult way. Amen.

Journal Reflection: Author, Philip Yancey, shared a story of a friend who teaches at a prominent university in the South. His friend once had her students write a paper on the passage you just read (Matthew 5:3-12), and the responses she received were alarming. The students (many had been raised in church-going families), pointed out repeatedly that Jesus' teachings were difficult, unrealistic, and foolish. Yancey points out, however, “In the Beatitudes, strange sayings that at first glance seem absurd, Jesus offers a paradoxical key to abundant life.”

Resolve: God, show me the wisdom and life-changing power in your “absurd” teachings.

TUESDAY **1-25-11**

Read: John 3:1-21 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=john+3:1-21)

Prayer: God, I come to you with questions... Why? What? When? Where? How? And the answers I receive sometimes leave me more confused. Give me peace in the presence of uncertainty and doubt. Open my eyes to the wonder of mystery. Amen.

Journal Reflection: Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night, a time when his actions would not be scrutinized by his Pharisee colleagues. Do your questions embarrass you? Are you ashamed to air your doubts? Do the answers trouble you? Come to Jesus; ask your questions, “Come to the light.”

Resolve: I will freely ask my questions and I will not fear if the answers aren't immediately evident.

WEDNESDAY **1-26-11**

Read: Isaiah 53:1-6 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=isaiah+53:1-6)

Prayer: My faith is built on a cross where you, my Lord, were hung bleeding and bruised. Many cannot comprehend such a sight – I'm not so sure I understand it myself – but Lord Christ, in you, I put my hope. Amen.

Journal Reflection: Messiahs take on many forms. Some are heroic, strong, victorious and mighty. Some are serious, dignified and fearless. Jesus, the Savior and messiah of the world, defies all of these descriptions. He is bruised, beaten and bleeding. What does that say about us as Christians? What does a crucified Savior say about our faith?

Resolve: I will praise the crucified Christ.

THURSDAY **1-27-11**

Read: Psalm 31:9-24 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=psalm+31:9-24)

Prayer: God, many of my friends are fearful of their future. I hear news of terror and despair on the radio, and see fearful images on the television. “But, I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’”

Journal Reflection: The rumor mill is a relentless, ruthless force, and if we listen long enough and choose to let such news permeate our psyche, we're bound to be discouraged, pessimistic and frustrated. David, the writer of this psalm, has been listening to such news and you can feel the heaviness in his words. And then, beginning in verse 14, David chooses to shift his focus from the rumors, the common sense of the world, and instead, believes in the invisible, trustworthy God. When we face the fear and oppressive negativity around us, may we have the strength to shift our focus to the living and powerful God as David did.

Resolve: I will trust you, God.

FRIDAY**1-28-11****Read:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=ii+corinthians+4:1-6)**Prayer:** God, my faith sometimes feels so foolish. Many can't understand why I would believe such things. Help me to not "lose heart." Shine your light in my darkness, illuminate my heart, and help me to keep believing when others tell me to give up.**Journal Reflection:** Our faith is not an easy one to believe. There are parts that defy logic and explanation. We believe in one God that exists as The Trinity. We embrace values that go against the flow of our culture. We have a "veiled" and mysterious Gospel. Perhaps it's not meant to be as clear as others have made it out to be. Perhaps it's supposed to be difficult and disturbing. This Christian life we've committed ourselves to embrace is not an easy life... but it's a good life.**Resolve:** I will not lose heart and I will cling to my sometimes troubling and difficult faith.**SATURDAY****1-29-11****Read:** Daniel 1:1-17 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=daniel+1:1-17)**Prayer:** Give me courage to cling to my convictions. Give me endurance to face the journey ahead. Give me a new vision that comes from desiring you.**Journal Reflection:** Daniel recognized the importance of maintaining his identity as a follower of the one, true God. He and his friends knew that if they simply followed the orders of the presiding authorities then their faith and cultural heritage was at risk. Is your life and behavior distinct from the surrounding culture? Are you making decisions based on your faith and convictions?**Resolve:** I will obey the words of God even if they are perceived as "different."**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS****For Sunday, January 23, 2011's Sermon****Foundational Scripture: I Corinthians 1: 10-18****Featured Scripture Reflection:** "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose." (I Corinthians 1:10 NRSV) (<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>)**Opening Icebreaker:** What is the funniest sibling rivalry story you can think of to share?**Scripture Questions****What is the scripture saying?**

- What is going on within the Corinthian Church?
- Who was Apollos? (see Acts 18:24-19:1) (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=acts+18:24; 19:1)
- What facts about Jesus are important in a church divided?
- What does Paul do to undercut the divisions within the church?

How is your life touched?

- What is a special contribution that a Christian group has made to your life?
- What is the strength you have received from Christ through a group?
- How does the human nature of aggression and sibling rivalry affect a group or church?
- Who is your Father/Mother in the faith?

What is God's invitation to you?

- What is Jesus' plan for conflict resolution and how can you implement Jesus' plan in your everyday life?

What can you pray for?

Pray that Chilson Hills will be a joyous, faithful, radically honest, praying community of God's resurrection power celebrating the Christ's transforming hope and love in the midst of our individual lives, our families, and our church.