



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

March 19 2023

Living by Faith in the Faith

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." –Romans 1:16-17

In the Old Testament, God used the people of Israel to sort things out for the world. That's why He had them stand in two groups on two sides of a valley on two mountains and call out how they would be blessed for obeying God's Law and cursed for disobeying it. Like the days and nights in Genesis 1, God's standards are clear, black-and-white categories of right and wrong.

People can know how to live holy lives that are pleasing to Him, by following God's clear standards. God also provided a system of sacrifices to show the cost of forgiveness. Then He established a royal dynasty—a king and his descendants—to lead Israel to obey Him, so they could receive the blessings of righteousness.

Despite the blessing of being God's people, the ancient Israelis were born in sin—like everyone else—so they were unable to be holy and please God by obeying His law. Cycles of obedience led to blessing, then periods of disobedience led to punishment. A representative sample of all of humanity, Israel became stuck in these cycles, which shaped their entire history. What in the world was God to do with sinful Israel? What was He to do with sinful people in general?

Almighty God is free to do whatever He wants—whatever is consistent with His nature. The Great I Am is absolutely free to be who He is. But God is love, and the first thing He did in His relationship with His people was to bind Himself to them in a covenant. A Holy God inexorably tied to an unholy people. How in the world would that work out?

What God sorted out in the Old Testament, He focused in the New. He resolved the tension created by His covenant bond with sinners—the only kind of people He had to work with—by forming a new bond that was available to everyone by faith—a new covenant, paid for by Christ's blood. A new chance for a new start is good news for people who are hopelessly lost. The New Testament word for good news is *evangelion*, from which we get our word "evangelical." Its English translation is "Gospel."

Briefly stated the Gospel is God's power in action, delivering souls from slavery to sin. Jesus—the Lamb of God—paid the cost of all sin when He died as God's sacrifice for all sin. God raised Jesus from the dead and He lives forever, as will everyone who trusts Him. Because of Jesus' perfect obedience and death for sin, we can be free from sin's strangle hold on our lives. Because of His resurrection from the dead, we are free from death and hell—the penalty for sin.

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel, because Christ saved him and completely transformed his life. An angry agent of forced obedience turned in a moment into a proclaimer of God's grace by faith. He'd fought to be righteous all his life and zealously tried to force people to comply with the perfect standards laid out in God's Law, even though everyone who attempted that feat had failed miserably.

But as he traveled along the road to Damascus, Paul met Jesus—alive and well, even though He'd been crucified. There he received God's perfect righteousness as a gift. By His grace, God made him completely free, utterly new, and entirely focused. Paul spent the rest of his life proclaiming the Gospel that had changed him forever.

And the world has never been the same.

To the praise of God's glory

Continued Daily Bible Reading

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible in 1 Year	Deuteronomy 26-28	Deuteronomy 29-31	Deuteronomy 32-34	Romans 1-3	Romans 4-6	Romans 7-9	Romans 10-12
Year 1	Matthew 28	Exodus 1	Exodus 2	Exodus 3	Exodus 4	Exodus 5	Exodus 6
Year 2	1 st Samuel 6	1 st Samuel 7	1 st Samuel 8	1 st Samuel 9	1 st Samuel 10	1 st Samuel 11	1 st Samuel 12
Year 3	John 6	John 7	John 8	John 9	John 10	John 11	John 12

Daily Prayer

Don't let anything make you doubt the sufficiency of God's grace.

Sunday (Church): *For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God (2nd Corinthians 4:15).* Ask God to pour out His grace in our worship this Sunday, so many others can come to worship and rejoice in Him.

Monday (Home and Family): *Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace (2nd Corinthians 1:15).* Ask God to renew your awareness of the constancy of His grace and forgiveness.

Tuesday (Job/School): *Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain (2nd Corinthians 6:1).* Ask God to make His grace effective in you and through you.

Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community): *We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part (2nd Corinthians 8:1-2).* Pray that God will make His grace overflow from you in generous giving.

Thursday (Our Nation): *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich (2nd Corinthians 8:9).* Ask God to fill us to overflowing with the riches of His grace.

Friday (The World): *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work (2nd Corinthians 9:8).* Pray for faith in God's ability to enable you to do anything He calls you to do.

Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing): *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me (2nd Corinthians 12:9).* Praise God for your troubles and weaknesses, along with the great things He will accomplish through them.

Prayer for Our Leaders

Ask God to draw our leaders increasingly close to Himself and bless them indeed.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Tamene Menna, Terilyn Brown, Steve Dahlgren, Amber McEwen, and Tyler Van Horsen.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Woody Armstrong, Steve Flood, Craig Hawkins, Perry Schaefer, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michele Balga, Bob Brown, John Cordill, Colin Cordill, Megan Cordill, Laura Flood, Noah Gauderman, Carolee Jefferson, Cade MacRitchie, Sam Nguyen, Lauren Sanner, Corie Saunders, Dani Tiqui, Micah Valdez, Christina Vasquez, and Holli Worthington.

What God's Done for Us

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. -1st Corinthians 1:18