

## **Bible study for this week** 4/23/12~4/29/12

\***April 23 (Monday), 2012** {[Ecclesiastes 3:1~13](#)} Key: Nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives. ([Ecclesiastes 3:12](#)) “**Longing For Spring**” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 16~18](#); [Luke 17:20~37](#)

It’s been a long, cold winter, and I am eager for warm weather. I’m tired of seeing bare trees and lifeless brown leaves covering the ground. I long to see wildflowers poke through the dead leaves and to watch the woods turn green once more.

Yet even as I anticipate my favorite season, I hear my mother’s voice saying, “Don’t wish your life away.”

If you’re like me, you sometimes hear yourself saying, “When such and such happens, then I will . . . or; If only so and so would do this, then I would do that . . . or; I would be happy if . . . or; I will be satisfied when . . .”

In longing for some future good, we forget that every day—regardless of the weather or our circumstances—is a gift from God to be used for His glory.

According to author Ron Ash, “We are where we need to be and learning what we need to learn. Stay the course because the things we experience today will lead us to where He needs us to be tomorrow.”

In every season, there is a reason to rejoice and an opportunity to do good ([Eccl. 3:12](#)). The challenge for each of us every day is to find something to rejoice about and some good to do—and then to do both.

*Meditate:* Just as the winter turns to spring, Our lives have changing seasons too; So when a gloomy forecast comes, Remember—God has plans for you.

*Aphorism:* Every season brings a reason to rejoice.

\***April 24 (Tuesday), 2012** {[Micah 6:1~8](#)} Key: What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? ([Micah 6:8](#)) “**A “Banana Slug” Lesson**” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 19~20](#); [Luke 18:1~23](#)

Sports team names have a variety of origins. They come from history (Spartans, Mountaineers), nature (Cardinals, Terrapins), and even colors (Orange, Reds). One even comes from the mollusk family.

In the 1980s, the University of California at Santa Cruz was just starting to get involved in competitive sports. UCSC had a bit of disdain for the overemphasis some big-time schools place on athletics, so the student body sought a team name that would reflect a somewhat different approach. They decided on the Banana Slug, a yellow, slimy, slow, shell-less mollusk. It was a clever way for UCSC to give a balanced perspective on the relative worth of sports.

I have always loved sports, but I know that they can easily become more important than they should be. What matters most in life is what Jesus said is most vital—loving God with all of our hearts and loving our neighbors as ourselves ([Matt. 22:37~39](#)). Micah listed God’s requirements this way: “do justly,” “love mercy,” and “walk humbly with your God” (6:8). For believers in Jesus, it is vital that nothing else takes top priority over God’s expectations for us.

What matters most to you? The Spartans? The Red Sox? Or loving God in thought, word, and action?

*Meditate:* Lord, what matters most to You today? What can direct us in each thing we do? Could it be to let nothing at all Interfere with our deep love for You?

*Aphorism:* Beware of spending too much time on matters of too little importance.

\***April 25 (Wednesday), 2012** { [Galatians 2:11~21](#) } Key: I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. ([Galatians 2:20](#)) “**Our Co-Pilot?**” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 21~22](#); [Luke 18:24~43](#)

The bumper sticker “Jesus is my co-pilot” may be a well-intentioned sentiment, but it has always troubled me. Whenever I’m in the driver’s seat of my life, the destination is nowhere good. Jesus is not meant to be just a spiritual “co-pilot” giving directions every now and then. He is always meant to be in the driver’s seat. Period!

We often say that Jesus died for us, which of course is true. But there’s more to it than that. Because Jesus died on the cross, something inside of us died—the power of sin. It’s what Paul meant when he said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” ([Gal. 2:20](#)). We were essentially co-crucified with Him. With Jesus in the driver’s seat, the old destinations are off-limits. No more turning down the streets of self-centeredness, greed, or lust. No more off-road ventures into the swamp of pride or the ditch of bitterness. We were crucified with Him and He is at the wheel now! He died so that He alone can drive and define us.

So, if you’ve died and Christ lives in you, He’s not your co-pilot. Your joy is to let Him drive and define your life. There may be a few bumps in the road, but you can count on it—He’ll take you somewhere good.

*Meditate:* Lord, I thank You for salvation, For Your mercy, full and free; Take my all in consecration, Glorify Yourself in me.

*Aphorism:* Still at the wheel of your life? It’s time to let Jesus drive.

\***April 26 (Thursday), 2012** { [Acts 28:16~31](#) } Key: Paul . . . received all who came to him. ([Acts 28:30](#)) “**A Universe Of Humanity**” Bible In One Year: [2 Samuel 23~24](#); [Luke 19:1~27](#)

During the 1920s and 30s, photographer August Sander set out to portray a cross-section of German society. Through his lens he saw factory workers and financiers, actresses and housewives, Nazis and Jews. Even though his published collection contains only people in and around his hometown of Cologne, he captured what David Propson, writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, called “a universe of humanity in his restricted sphere.”

That phrase strikes me as an apt description of our lives and the people we meet day by day. Wherever we live, we cross paths with people from many backgrounds and beliefs.

For years, the apostle Paul traveled and preached before being imprisoned in Rome. There he continued to touch people with the gospel because he cared about them and wanted them to know Jesus Christ. The book of Acts concludes with Paul confined in Rome, living under guard in a rented house, where he “received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ” ([Acts 28:30~31](#)).

Instead of focusing on his restrictions, Paul saw opportunities. That’s the key for us as well. There is a universe of humanity within our reach today.

*Meditate:* You are called with a holy calling The light of the world to be, To lift up the lamp of the gospel That others the light may see.

*Aphorism:* The gospel is a priceless gift that’s offered free to everyone.

\***April 27 (Friday), 2012** { [1 Samuel 12:19~25](#) } Key: I will never leave you nor forsake you. ([Hebrews 13:5](#)) “**For The Sake Of His Name**” Bible In One Year: [1 Kings 1~2](#); [Luke](#)

[19:28~48](#)

The ancient Israelites gathered at Gilgal for the coronation of Saul as their first king ([1 Sam. 11:15](#)). The Lord was not pleased that His people had asked for a king, yet on this occasion Samuel uttered these words: “The Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people” (12:22).

We too are God’s “own special people” if we have trusted Jesus as Savior ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). He will not forsake us even though He knows we will fail Him. He knows what we are like—sinful, weak, and frail. He knew it before He called us and drew us to Himself. The certainty of our salvation rests not in ourselves but on the character of God ([1 John 5:20](#)). He will keep us to the end.

This does not give us an excuse to continue in sin. Paul said, “Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” ([Rom. 6:2](#)). Our choices do reflect on God’s reputation, our witness in the world, and our fellowship with Him. But God will never reject His people, those who are truly His. The Lord cannot and will not forsake His own ([Heb. 13:5](#)).

We can rest assured. What God saves, He keeps—for the sake of His great name!

*Meditate:* “Able to keep!” how sure is the word! He is my Keeper, Savior, and Lord. “Never shall perish,” one of His sheep, Glory to God! He is able to keep.

*Aphorism:* Lives rooted in God’s unchanging grace can never be uprooted.

\***April 28 (Saturday), 2012** {[Matthew 16:24~28](#)} Key: Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ([Matthew 16:25](#)) “**Make My Brown Eyes Blue**” Bible In One Year: [1 Kings 3~5](#); [Luke 20:1~26](#)

As a young girl, Amy Carmichael (1867~1951) wished she had blue eyes instead of brown. She even prayed that God would change her eye color and was disappointed when it didn’t happen. At age 20, Amy sensed that the Lord was calling her to serve Him as a missionary. After serving in various places, she went to India. It was then that she realized God’s wisdom in the way He had made her. She may have had a more difficult time gaining acceptance from the brown-eyed people if her eyes had been blue. She served God in India for 55 years.

We don’t know for sure that Amy was more readily accepted because of her eye color. But we do know and believe that it is the Lord “who has made us, and not we ourselves” ([Ps. 100:3](#)). As we submit to His wisdom in everything, we can serve Him effectively.

Amy knew what submission was. When asked about missionary life, she replied, “Missionary life is simply a chance to die.” Jesus said, “Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” ([Matt. 16:25](#)).

That describes the devoted Christian’s life as well— total surrender to God’s plans and will for us. May we submit to Him today.

*Meditate:* Although I may not understand The path You’ve laid for me, Complete surrender to Your will—Lord, this my prayer shall be.

*Aphorism:* Our lives are never more secure than when they are abandoned to God.

\***April 29 (Sunday), 2012** { [Mark 1:32~39](#) } Key: The whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many. ([Mark 1:33~34](#)) “**Our Demanding Schedules**” Bible In One Year: [1 Kings 6~7](#); [Luke 20:27~47](#)

Is your life too busy? Business deadlines, productivity quotas, and shuttling children to lessons and sporting events can really fill up your schedule. It’s easy to think, *If only I didn’t have so many responsibilities, then I could walk in vital union with God.*

Yet C. S. Lewis wisely points out that no one was busier than Christ. “Our model is the Jesus . . . of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this . . . is the Divine life operating under human conditions.”

We read of Jesus in Capernaum: “At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many” ([Mark 1:32~34](#)). The next day Christ sought out a solitary place and prayed. There He received direction from His Father to pursue a demanding ministry in another place. Our Lord communed with His Father and depended on the Spirit to minister through Him.

Is your schedule demanding? Follow the example of Jesus and set aside a specific time for prayer. Then depend upon God’s power to help you meet each day’s demands.

*Meditate:* The many tasks we face each day Can burden and oppress, But spending time with God each day Can bring relief from stress.

*Aphorism:* To keep your life in balance, lean on the Lord.