

## **Bible study for this week** 11/14/11~11/20/11

\***November 14 (Monday) 2011** { Ezra 3:10~13 } Key: The people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping. (Ezra 3:13) “**Joy In The Midst Of Grief**” Bible In One Year: Lamentations 3~5; Hebrews 10:19~39

A person who says shares: After only a few art lessons, 10-year-old Joel decided to try his hand at painting a flower. By looking at a color photograph of a Rose of Sharon, Joel was able to paint a beautiful mixture of blue, purple, red, green, and white. This made the flower, which had been photographed on the day Joel’s aunt died, seem to come to life. To the family, his painting symbolized a bittersweet mixture of feelings. While it provided a lasting reminder of the loss they had suffered, it also carried a celebration of Joel’s newly discovered artistic gift. The painting gave joy in the midst of grief.

When the people of Judah returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon, they too had a bittersweet experience. As they began rebuilding Solomon’s temple, many in the crowd sang songs of praise. At the same time, some older people, who had seen the beauty of the original temple that had been destroyed by war, wept aloud. We are told that “the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping” (Ezra 3:13).

Grieving can be like that. While there is sadness in looking back, it also includes a promise of joy in trusting God for the future. Even in a devastating loss, we have this hope: The Lord provides joy in the midst of grief.

***Meditate:*** We sorrow not as others do, Whose hopes fade like the flowers; There is a hope that’s born of God, And such a hope is ours.

***Aphorism:*** Even in the bleakest times, Christians have the brightest hope.

\***November 15 (Tuesday) 2011** { Hebrews 11:1~6 } Key: We make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing to Him. (2 Corinthians 5:9) “**Pleasing God**” Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 1~2; Hebrews 11:1~19

Andy Warhol, the pop-art painter of such American images as the Campbell’s soup can, once said, “In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.” But he was wrong. There are millions of people who will never grab their moment in the spotlight. Some of them are the men and women who spend their lives doing things like working hard, raising godly children, faithfully praying for others, sharing their faith with those who don’t yet know Jesus. They teach Sunday school, bring meals to the sick, drive senior citizens to doctors’ appointments, and do countless other kindnesses.

These people may never be recognized outside their circle of family and friends. Certainly, their names aren’t well known. And although they willingly, and often sacrificially, give of themselves, they may not receive a whole lot of thanks or praise for their service. Yet God knows of their faithfulness and is pleased by their obedience.

Second Corinthians 5:9 teaches us to “make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing” to God. As we, by faith, believe in Him and give our lives in service to Him, He is pleased (Heb. 11:6). That’s our reward, because God’s approval is always sweeter than the applause of the crowd.

***Meditate:*** Look not to the people around you, Nor wait for their laurels of praise; Enough that the Savior has found you And calls you to serve all your days.

***Aphorism:*** The deeds God finds pleasing are those done in service for Him.

\***November 16 (Wednesday) 2011** { Revelation 3:14~22 } Key: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. (Revelation 3:15) “**The**

**Problem With Self-Sufficiency”Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 3~4; Hebrews 11:20~40**

The city of Laodicea had a water problem. One nearby town had fabulous hot springs and another had cold, clear water. Laodicea, however, was stuck with tepid, mineral-laden water that tasted like sulphur. Not hot. Not cold. Just gross.

Given those facts, the words of Jesus to the Laodicean believers in Revelation 3 must have stung. Jesus rebuked them for being “neither cold nor hot” (v.15). And when He thought of them, He felt like vomiting (v.16)—like the effect of their drinking water.

What was their problem? It was the sin of self-sufficiency. The Laodiceans had become so affluent that they had forgotten how much they needed Jesus (v.17).

When we say we have everything we need, but Jesus isn’t at the top of the list, He is deeply offended. Self-sufficiency distracts us from pursuing the things we really need that only He can give. If you’d rather have cash than character, if your credit cards are maximized and your righteousness is minimized, if you’ve become smart but aren’t wise, then you’ve been shopping in all the wrong places. Jesus offers commodities that are far better (v.18).

He’s knocking at your heart’s door (v.20). Let Him in. He will give you all you really need!

**Meditate:** We must be careful to avoid All self-sufficiency; If sinful pride gets in the way, God’s hand we will not see.

**Aphorism:** We always have enough when God is our supply.

**\*November17(Thursday)2011** {Mark 12:41~44} Key: She out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.(Mark 12:44)“**Two Mites**”Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 5~7; Hebrews 12

Jesus sat in the temple near the treasury and watched as people walked by and deposited their gifts for the temple (Mark 12). Some made a show of it, perhaps so others could see how much they had given. Just then a poor woman came by and threw in two “mites.”

A mite was the least valuable coin in circulation. Thus the widow’s gift was very small, amounting to nothing in most folk’s eyes. But our Lord saw what others did not see. She had given “all that she had” (Mark 12:44). The widow wasn’t trying to draw attention to herself. She was simply doing what she was able to do. And Jesus noticed!

We mustn’t forget that our Lord sees all that we do, though it may seem very small. It may be nothing more than showing a cheerful countenance in difficult times or an unnoticed act of love and kindness to someone who happens to pass by. It may be a brief, silent prayer for a neighbor in need.

Jesus said, “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. . . . But when you do a charitable deed, . . . may [it] be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly” (Matt. 6:1~4).

**Meditate:** May our gifts be sacrificial, From our hearts, and full of love; Secretive and never showy, Pleasing our great God above.

**Aphorism:** God looks at the heart, not the hand; the giver, not the gift.

**\*November18(Friday)2011** {Genesis 2:1~7} Key: The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)“**God Works In Mud**”Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 8~10; Hebrews 13

In a 1950s novel, there is a scene in which four village men confess their sins to one another. One of the men, Michelis, cries out, “How can God let us live on the earth? Why

doesn't He kill us to purify creation?" "Because, Michelis," one of the men answered, "God is a potter; He works in mud."

This is literally what the Lord did in Genesis. The sovereign Creator formed and shaped humanity by unique design. This process involved fashioning a man from the dust of the ground. The word *formed* in [Genesis 2:7](#) describes the work of an artist. Like a potter, molding and fashioning mud into a pot or some other earthen vessel, so the Lord God formed humanity from clay.

God's work with dust and mud continued by breathing into man the breath of life, changing his form into a living soul. This made man a spiritual being, with a capacity to serve and fellowship with the Lord.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God continued working in and with mud, sending His Son Jesus to die for humanity and then regenerating those who receive Him so that we can enjoy fellowship with Him. In gratitude, let's use our hands to do good works for His glory.

**Meditate:** In His own image God created man, He formed his body from the dust of earth; But more than that, to all who are in Christ He gives eternal life by second birth.

**Aphorism:** God is the only One who can make the dirty clean.

**\*November 19 (Saturday) 2011** {Galatians 5:22~26} Key: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22~23) "**Precious Fruit**" Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 11~13; James 1

How much would you be willing to pay for a piece of fruit? In Japan, someone paid more than \$6,000 for one Densuke watermelon. Grown only on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, this beautiful dark-green sphere looks like a bowling ball. The nearly 18~pound watermelon was one of only a few thousand available that year. The fruit's rarity brought an astronomical price on the market.

Christians have fruit that is far more precious than the Densuke watermelon. It's called the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" ([Gal. 5:22~23](#)). Each "fruit" is a different aspect of Christlikeness. In the Gospels, we see how Christ exemplified these virtues. Now He wants to produce them in our hearts—in what we say, how we think, and how we respond to life ([John 15:1~4](#)).

A rare and delicious fruit may bring a premium price in the marketplace, but Christlike character is of far greater worth. As we confess all known sin and yield to God's indwelling Spirit, our lives will be transformed to the likeness of Christ ([1 John 1:9](#); [Eph. 5:18](#)). This spiritual fruit will fill our lives with joy, bless those around us, and last into eternity.

**Meditate:** Think not alone of outward form; Its beauty will depart; But cultivate the Spirit's fruits That grow within the heart.

**Aphorism:** Fruitfulness for Christ depends on fellowship with Christ.

**\*November 20 (Sunday) 2011** {1 Peter 4:7~11} Key: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10) "**Help With A Home Run**" Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 14~15; James 2

Sara Tucholsky, a softball player for Western Oregon University, hit the first home run of her life in a game against Central Washington. But she nearly didn't get credit for it. As she rounded first base in excitement, she missed it! When she wheeled back to correct her mistake, she injured her knee. Crying, she crawled back to the base. By rule, she had

to touch all four bases on her own for the home run to count. Her teammates could not assist her in any way.

Then Mallory Holtman, the first baseman for the opposing team, spoke up. “Would it be okay if we carried her around?” After conferring, the umpires agreed. So Mallory and another teammate made a chair of their hands and carted Sara around the bases. By the time they were through carrying her, many were crying at this selfless act of compassion, and Sara was awarded her home run.

The lesson for followers of Christ is clear. When fellow Christians stumble and fall, we need to follow the example of these ballplayers. Reach out. Lift them up and carry them along. It’s a wonderful opportunity to “minister . . . to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

***Meditate:*** When a fellow Christian stumbles And he needs some help to stand; Don’t ignore his circumstances—Offer him your outstretched hand.

***Aphorism:*** No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.