

Bible study for this week 11/21/11~11/27/11

***November 21 (Monday) 2011** {Revelation 21:1~8} Key: [It has not] entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9) "**Beyond Imagination!**" Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 16~17; James 3

A college professor at a Christian school perceived that his students held a distorted view of heaven; they considered it to be static and boring. So, to stir their imaginations, he asked them these questions:

"Do you wish you would wake up tomorrow morning to discover that the person you loved most passionately loved you even more? Wake up hearing music you have always loved but had never heard with such infinite joy before? Rise to the new day as if you were just discovering the Pacific Ocean? Wake up without feeling guilty about anything at all? See to the very core of yourself, and like everything you see? Wake up breathing God as if He were air? Loving to love Him? And loving everybody else in the bargain?"

In response to that professor's intriguing questions, the students all lifted their hands. If that's what heaven will be like, and even infinitely more so, they certainly wanted to be there.

"I go to prepare a place for you," Jesus told His disciples (John 14:2). We all share the desire—really a deep-down yearning—to be in that glorious home forever. It is a place of indescribable bliss. And the supreme blessing will be the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

Meditate: When we all get to heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We'll sing and shout the victory.

Aphorism: The greatest pleasures of earth cannot be compared to the joys of heaven.

***November 22 (Tuesday) 2011** {Ecclesiastes 2:15~26} Key: Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2) "**Heaven On Earth?**" Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 18~19; James 4

The Singapore developer of an extravagant condominium advertised its new project as, "Rediscover Heaven on Earth." I suppose it meant to convey to prospective buyers that their purchase would be so luxurious that it would be like living in heaven while here on earth.

Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes, was an extremely wealthy man (Eccl. 1:12). He tried to find heaven on earth and had the means to live as luxuriously as he could wish (2:1~10). Yet he wasn't satisfied. So disillusioned was he with life, he described it with just one word—"vanity" (or "meaningless"). And he repeated the word eight times in chapter two alone. As long as he looked only at life "under the sun" (2:18), he felt hollow and dissatisfied. All of his striving was ultimately futile. There would come a day when he would have to relinquish his possessions and leave them to someone else (v.18).

If you are a Christian, you can look to Christ's promise of a heavenly home He has gone to prepare (John 14:2). That's why Paul advised those who are enjoying what God has given: "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). Don't try to find heaven on earth. You won't—no matter how hard you look!

Meditate: Lightly hold earth's joys so transient, Loosely cling to things of clay, Grasp perfections everlasting, Where Christ dwells in heaven's day!

Aphorism: Those who have their hearts fixed on heaven will hold loosely the things of earth.

***November 23 (Wednesday) 2011** {2 Samuel 18:31~19:4} Key: The king was deeply

moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. (2 Samuel 18:33)“Preventing Regret”Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 20~21; James 5

In the 1980s, the British band Mike and the Mechanics recorded a powerful song titled, “The Living Years.” The songwriter mourns his father’s death, because their relationship had been strained and marked by silence rather than sharing. The singer remorsefully says, “I didn’t get to tell him all the things I had to say.” Struggling with regret over words unsaid and love unexpressed, he laments, “I just wish I could have told him in the living years.”

King David similarly regretted his broken relationship with his son Absalom. Angered over David’s refusal to punish Amnon for raping his sister Tamar, Absalom killed Amnon and fled (2 Sam. 13:21~34). David’s servant Joab knew that he longed to go to his fugitive son, so he arranged for Absalom to be brought to him. But their relationship was never the same again. Absalom’s bitterness sparked a conflict that ended with his death (18:14). It was a bitter victory for King David, causing him to lament his lost son and their failed relationship (18:33). No amount of grieving, however, could undo David’s heartache.

We can learn from David’s regret when dealing with broken relationships. The pain of trying to make things right can be hard. But it’s much better to do what we can to make things right “in the living years.”

Meditate:If you have already injured and given offence, should go to repair now; Because as we shut it for the moment, what God saw is jewellery .

Aphorism:A broken relationship can be repaired— but only if you’re willing to try.

***November24(Thursday)2011**{Mark 10:35~45}Key:The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. (Mark 10:45)“**Called To Serve**”Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 22~23; 1 Peter 1

When George W. Bush was President, he made a surprise visit to serve Thanksgiving Day dinner to soldiers deployed overseas. One reporter covering the story thought that some might save their meal as a souvenir, explaining, “It’s not often that anyone is served by the President.”

All elected officials are public servants—in a global, symbolic way—so they are always serving. So it seems that an act of service should not have been one of the biggest news items of the day.

Many people have a genuine desire to serve others, but for some, service is really self-serving. This was true when Jesus was training His disciples. They were under the impression that following Him would make them great.

But Jesus quickly set them straight: “Those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you” (Mark 10:42~43). Jesus made it clear to them that they were in training to become servants: “Whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all” (v.44).

We can sign up for any number of leadership training seminars, but the only good leaders are those who are first and foremost good servants.

Meditate:They truly lead who lead by love, And humbly serve the Lord; Their lives will bear the Spirit’s fruit And magnify His Word.

Aphorism:A good leader is a good servant.

***November25(Friday)2011**{1 Thessalonians 1}Key: The word of the Lord has sounded forth . . . in every place.(1 Thessalonians 1:8)“**What A Ride!**”Bible In One Year: Ezekiel

24~26; 1 Peter 2

Francis Asbury rode 6,000 miles a year on horseback for nearly half a century. Despite ill health, he drove himself tirelessly. He sustained himself with venison jerky—a food that wouldn't spoil during his extended travels. Asbury is remembered for introducing the Methodist “circuit-riding preacher” as an effective way to capture the American frontier for Christ. Planting new churches in remote areas was central to his approach.

At the close of Asbury's ministry, he had recruited over 700 traveling preachers. In 1771, when Asbury arrived in the colonies, there were only about 600 Methodists in America. Forty-five years later, there were 200,000!

In many ways, Asbury's strategy for planting churches reflects the approach of the apostle Paul. To the church he had planted in Thessalonica, Paul wrote: “From you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place” (1 Thess. 1:8; see Acts 17:1~10).

The days of the “circuit-riding preacher” have come and gone. But each of us has a “frontier” where friends, relatives, and neighbors are our mission field. Can you think of someone today who needs to hear the good news?

Meditate: Lord, lay some soul upon my heart, And love that soul through me; And may I nobly do my part To win that soul for Thee.

Aphorism: Those who love Christ have a love for the lost.

***November 26 (Saturday) 2011** {Nehemiah 9:32~37} Key: They have not served You . . . in the many good things that You gave them. (Nehemiah 9:35) “**Confession And Thanksgiving**” Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 27~29; 1 Peter 3

During a Sunday worship service, our congregation said this prayer of confession in unison: “Gracious God, like many believers before us, we complain when things do not go our way. We want abundance of everything rather than what is sufficient to sustain us. We would rather be elsewhere than where we are at the moment. We would rather have the gifts You give to others than what You provide for us. We would rather have You serve us than serve You. Forgive our lack of gratitude for what You give.”

Abundance is no guarantee of gratefulness or thanksgiving. Prosperity may even turn our hearts away from the Lord.

When a group of Jewish exiles returned from Babylon with Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, they gathered to confess their sins and those of their fathers. They prayed: “Neither our kings nor our princes, our priests nor our fathers, have kept Your law . . . For they have not served You in their kingdom, or in the many good things that You gave them, or in the large and rich land which You set before them, nor did they turn from their wicked works” (Neh. 9:34~35).

Confession is a powerful prelude to a prayer of thanks-giving. Obedience is the Amen.

Meditate: Lord, before we come to ask Your blessing On this special day we call Thanksgiving, We would bow to You, our sins confessing, Then we'll lift our praise in grateful living.

Aphorism: Confession opens the door to thanksgiving.

***November 27 (Sunday) 2011** {Ephesians 3:14~21} Key: That you . . . may be able to comprehend . . . what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ. (Ephesians 3:17~19) “**Loved Well**” Bible In One Year: Ezekiel 30~32; 1 Peter 4

We were gathered with family for Thanksgiving dinner when someone asked if each person would share what he or she was thankful for. One by one we talked.

Three-year-old Joshua was thankful for “music,” and Nathan, aged 4, for “horses.” We were all silenced, though, when Stephen (who was soon to turn 5) answered, “I’m thankful that Jesus loves me so well.” In his simple faith, he understood and was grateful for the love of Jesus for him personally. He told us that Jesus showed His love by dying on a cross.

The apostle Paul wanted the believers in the church at Ephesus to understand how well God loved them, and that was his prayer: “That [they would] be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ” (Eph. 3:17~19). He prayed that they would be rooted and grounded in that love.

To ground ourselves in God’s love, it would be helpful to review these verses frequently or even memorize them. We can also take a few minutes each day to thank the Lord for the specific ways He shows His love to us. This will help us to grow in our belief and be thankful—as Stephen is—that Jesus loves us “so well.”

Meditate: O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure—The saints’ and angels’ song.

Aphorism: To renew your love for Christ, review Christ’s love for you.