

Week 42 Daily Devotional

I. Prayer to enter the Lord's presence:

Be still for a moment. "Lord, I give the day that is now past to you. It is yours. I give the day that is to come to you; help me to see where you are working and to join you there. Speak to me during these moments. I commit them and myself to you."

II. Prayer of Confession:

"Lord, you are faithful to forgive me and cleanse me of my sin when I confess it to you. I confess my sin(s) of _____. Thank you for forgiveness." (1 John 1:9)

III. Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Choose to be thankful, speak out loud of what God has done.

"Thank you, Father, for _____. Fill my heart and my mouth with gratitude throughout this day."

IV. Scripture Reflection

Day 1

Read

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether, then, it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.

Reflect

Paul passed on what was "most important." Paul wrote about many things so when he says he is about to tell them what is most important we should pay careful attention. What is most important for Paul was the historical reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus. He writes that the reality of this is verified by the witness of Scripture as well as many people. Most of these witnesses were still alive at the time of Paul's writing. He was challenging them to "go and ask these people." He was not afraid of the resurrection being scrutinized because he knew it would stand up to any scrutiny.

Respond

Paul "worked hard" because of the reality of the resurrection. Why do you work hard? What do you work hard for? What is the engine that drives your daily behavior? What would it mean to make the gospel the main engine that drives your life? Talk to God about this.

Day 2

Read

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 ¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. ¹⁵ Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

Reflect

Some Christians lack a full understanding of their future state of existence. Their thinking has been influenced more by movies than the Bible. Christians will not live as "angels" or "disembodied spirits" floating in dreamlike existence. Our future destiny is resurrection. New bodies and a new heaven and earth. Paul is challenging the prevalent view of his time that believed there is no bodily resurrection but only some vague "spiritual" afterlife. Read the passage again and find the arguments Paul uses here to defend the reality of the resurrection.

Respond

Verse 19 says "If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone." Paul said this because his hope in Christ cost him in this life. What are some ways it could be said that you should be pitied if your hope in Christ is for this life only? What are some ways you "pay a price" for your faith?

Day 3

Read

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 ²⁰ But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. ²² For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be abolished is death. ²⁷ For God has put everything under his feet. Now when it says "everything" is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception. ²⁸ When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

Reflect

Firstfruits comes from the Old Testament where Israel was to bring the first part of the harvest to God as an offering. This was a recognition that God brought the harvest and that God would finish what he started...the remainder of the harvest would continue to come in. Christ is the Firstfruit of the "resurrection harvest." His resurrection guarantees ours. The abolishment of all "rule and all authority and power" refers to all the forces that are currently arrayed against God's reign. This includes demonic and human powers working to oppose God and his people. Justice and righteousness will reign supreme. Death itself will one day be put to death.

Respond

Pray for the injustice around the world. Pray for the oppressed, suffering under the heavy hand of human and demonic oppressors. Pray the Lord's prayer slowly and reflectively.

Matthew 6:9-13

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

Day 4

Read

1 Corinthians 15:29-49 ²⁹ Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them? ³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹ I face death every day, as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. ³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." ³⁴ Come to your senses and stop sinning; for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame. ³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?" ³⁶ You fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow—you are not sowing the body that will be, but only a seed, perhaps of wheat or another grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he wants, and to each of the seeds its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. ⁴¹ There is a splendor of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; in fact, one star differs from another star in splendor. ⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; ⁴³ sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; ⁴⁴ sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So it is written, The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ Like the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; like the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Reflect

There are several main ideas about what Paul was referring to here when he wrote of those "baptized for the dead." The most prevalent idea is that Paul is referring to people who were practicing this ritual in Corinth but that he did not condone it. Why didn't he critique it? Because he was using it as an example. Even these people, doing this strange ritual, demonstrate a faith in resurrection. More convincingly, Paul and others, demonstrated a faith in resurrection by putting their faith ahead of self-protection. He then addressed the intellectual struggles some have with the idea of a future resurrection of the body. This inability to accept resurrection stems from a lack of understanding regarding both the Scriptures and the power of God.

Respond

All around us is evidence of God. His creativity, his power, his existence. There is also evidence built into creation of God's future plans for us. As you move through this day and into the night pay attention to evidence of what God has done and will do in the created world you live in. Think specifically about the trees and plants and how they began as seeds, seeds that went into the ground to die in order to become what they are. Consider how Jesus died to come alive to resurrection. If you are a Christian, this is your future hope. Give thanks for this as you do today's activities.

Day 5

Read

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 ⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. ⁵⁴ When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up in victory.:

⁵⁵ Where, death, is your victory?

Where, death, is your sting?'

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! ⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Reflect

In most Bibles verse 55 is set apart with quotation marks or special indentation. This is to indicate it is a different genre(type of writing) than the verses that surround it. What is it's genre? It is a taunt. A taunt is best described as "mocking" or "provocative" speech. Like a sports team pointing at its opponent and laughing and saying derogatory things. A taunt indicates a lack of respect. Paul is not saying that death is to be taken lightly or that it's not heartbreaking now. He is specific about the timing of when death will be worthy of this taunt, it will be after the future resurrection. There will come a time in the future when the dead in Christ will be raised to resurrection and those still alive at the time of Christ's return will be changed "in place" to a resurrection existence. There is much confusion and disagreement about the timing of all this...but the timing is of no consequence for us. We are to trust God with the timing. We are often like small children in the car on a long trip, "Are we there yet?" No, we are not there yet. Yes, we will be there someday. On that day our most formidable foe...death will be taunted, disrespected.

Respond

Hebrews 2:¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Do you have anxiety about the future? About death or suffering? Do you have grief regarding a loved one who has died? Christ has taken the only power Satan has over you regarding death...fear. Give thanks to God for this. If you are able, listen to this song and give thanks to God for the gospel future hope.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Olahc83Kvp4>

V. Prayer for others:

Pray specifically for the concerns of your life and the lives of others.

VI. Prayer of commitment:

“Lord God, I commit to love you with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind and to love my neighbor as myself. Empower me today to love you and others with everything that I am.” (Luke 10:27)

This Month's Scripture Memory:

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.