December 9

Profile: The Disciple John

The Beloved Disciple

 One of John’s earliest encounters with Jesus was when Jesus allowed Peter to catch a large catch of fish, James and John being their partners helped them to shore. It is there that Jesus called them to be disciples as recalled in Luke 5:1-11.

 John was very close to Jesus, John was:

* At the Transfiguration
* Helped Peter with the last Passover Meal
* At Gethsemane
* The only disciple mentioned at the foot of the cross.

 John was given an honor at the foot of the cross: Read: John 19:26, 27. Jesus gave the care of his mother over to John from the cross.

 John was the author of the Books of John, I, II, III John and Revelation. John was very strong about false teachers and about doctrine and the revelation from God was probably the most moving experience for John, seeing the future and Heaven revealed. What an experience!

VERSE FOR TODAY: John 1:1

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, O Lord, for John and his recording of your life, teachings and the revelations, help me to use these writings to change my life and grow in you.

December 10

Profile: Mary and Martha

The Family

 The story of the raising of Lazarus is very familiar; this devotion is about his sisters, Mary and Martha.

 Martha was the housekeeper, concerned about the work – Read: Luke 10:40. Martha was worried about her daily tasks as we should be too but we should not let those worries take over to the point of shutting the Lord out of our lives.

 Although Mary was the one at the feet of Jesus, gathering all he said, Martha was also a very firm believer, when the Lord asked if she believed in him – Read: John 11:24-27.

 Mary was also a believer was more impulsive than Martha, like the time when Jesus and the disciples come to visit, after the Triumphal entry, when Mary took expensive perfume an anointed Jesus’ feet.

 Mary, Martha and Lazarus were very special friends of Jesus, he visited them on different occasions, and he wept at the grave of Lazarus before Lazarus was resurrected.

 Jesus knew what it is like to have friends and to be a friend. Jesus is our friend. We need friends and to love them to cry and laugh with them.

VERSE FOR TODAY: John 11:5

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to serve and believe as Mary and Martha did and to truly know you as a friend.

December 11

Profile: Mary Magdalene

From Possessed to Follower

 Mary Magdalene must have been a pitiful sight at her first encounter with Jesus, when she was possessed with seven demons, Jesus relieved her of that burden – Read: Luke 8:2.

 Although Mary Magdalene is not mentioned by name when “some women” are mentioned in accompaniment of Jesus, this seems to include Mary Magdalene.

 Mary Magdalene was with the Mary the mother of Jesus at the cross when Jesus was crucified, she was at the tomb at dawn to anoint the body of Jesus, with the other Mary, when they found out Jesus had risen they went to tell the disciples on their way they saw and recognized Jesus – Read: Matthew 28:9. How filled with joy and excitement Mary Magdalene must have been as she rushed to tell the disciples about her encounter with Jesus.

 Mary Magdalene was around when the meeting was held that elected Matthias as Judas’ successor and with the group at prayer meetings when “the women” are mentioned that suggests Mary Magdalene was there too. She was a very dedicated follower, if we could only project half this much dedication, we would be richly blessed as Mary Magdalene must have been.

VERSE FOR TODAY: John 20:16

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to go from sin possessed to loyal servant, thank-you for forgiveness.

December 12

Profile: You and Me

Every Day Christians

 We all live busy lives, with jobs, school, careers, children and housework. There never seems to be enough hours in a day and time passes by so quickly. We have to take time everyday to meet with the Lord before it is too late. We live as if we’ll be here forever, which we know is not true, we’ll either die or Jesus will return and either way it will be too late to accept Jesus and turn our lives around to the right.

 Every day we must show others Jesus in us, not being ashamed of our Lord but always speaking up for the right – Read: II Timothy 2:11-13.

 In these days of sin and immorality we should never be ashamed of doing good, the right thing, it may be the hard thing to do but we’ll never be sorry in this life or in the judgment. Verses like Romans 3:23, For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; KJV can be very discouraging but if you read on you’ll find in Romans 3:30 that all can be justified Jew and Gentile- Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. KJV. We are all justified through faith and the grace of God – Praise the Lord!

VERSE FOR TODAY: Mark 8:38

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, never to be ashamed of you or your teachings. Help me to tell others of your love and peace beyond understanding

December 13

Church: The Body of Christ

What is the Church?

 As we drive down the streets and roads we see many buildings set aside as churches, where the Church meets, the buildings are not the church, the Church is the people that go there, the Body of Christ, the believers. The hymn “The Church’s One Foundation” by Samuel J. Stone sums it up – The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord; She is His new creation by water and the word. From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride; With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died. – It could be said that Jesus owns the Church because He paid for our salvation, with his own life, which makes Him the head of the Church.

 When we are believing, baptized Christians, we are members of the Body of Chris, the universal Church, not necessarily attached to a certain group or denomination. We owe our loyalty to Christ; the Church will not be complete until Christ comes again to gather His believers unto himself.

 Christ is the head of the Church, the Bible should be the basis of a Church group, if you are looking for a Church home look out for those who practice other things than what are outlined in the Bible for the Church, today we must be very careful not to be taken in by cults and satanic groups. Some of these groups may look ok on the surface but have hidden rituals and meanings to rituals.

 We need to remember that the Church is much larger than the group that meets at Seventh and Main, the responsibility is not to one certain group but to the larger group, the Body of Christ.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Ephesians 1:22, 23

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thanks are to you, O Lord, for giving us a perfect example, you as the head of the Church, may we ever be mindful of who paid the price for the Church.

December 14

Church Life

Why Go?

 We are members of the Body of Christ whether we go to the church building or not, so why go? In this world of sin, the going to be in fellowship with other Christians helps us to renew our faith and rekindle our Christian enthusiasm!

 Using the human body to symbolize the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-26), if we have a hand or foot that doesn’t function as it should, our ability to work would be impaired. The same with the Body of Christ, if we are a part of it and we don’t participate the Body of Christ cannot function completely either. We may say that there are plenty to do the work, but God wanted us as a part of His Church and we have a purpose for being there and it is our responsibility to find our place and function within that place.

 Often people say, “I can remember and praise the Lord wherever and in whatever I choose to do instead of doing to worship services!” that statement can be true but the question that is raised from that statement is, WILL we think to praise the Lord? It is doubtful, we get caught up in fishing or a golf game or repair job and the Lord will not get a thought.

 We must take our function in the Body of Christ seriously, and use the gift that God gave us to His honor and glory.

VERSE FOR TODAY: I Corinthians 12:27

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to find my place in the Church and to fulfill that place with time, talent and enthusiasm. \*\*Note the extra reading\*

December 15

Church Life

The Lord’s Supper

 The Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper with his disciples in the Upper Room, this sacrament is also called communion – Read: I Corinthians 11:23-25.

 Before we partake of the Lord’s Supper we should examine ourselves – I Corinthians 11:28-29.

 We need to be careful to examine ourselves, to realize we are sinners and remember what Christ has done for us – Read: I Corinthians 11:31.

 Communion should be a very sacred moment that we can share with God and be thankful for the sacrifice of Jesus so that we can be with him in eternity – As the words of the hymn by Isaac Watts, “Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?” He did and we need to remember it not only at communion time but always!

VERSE FOR TODAY: I Corinthians 10:16

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, O Lord, for your sacrifice and for the Lord’s Supper so that we never forget what you have done for us. Help me never to partake in such a way that would bring damnation onto me.

December 16

Christian Life

Beware of False Prophets

 Today with all the many cults, we need to be very careful of false prophets. Paul had trouble with people trying to undo the teaching he had done in Galatia – Read: Galatians 1:6, 8.

 John gives us guidelines in knowing if a prophet is true or not – I John 4:2, 3.

 We are to keep the original message of God’s love and Jesus as the Messiah in our hearts – Read: I John 2:24, 25.

 Don’t fall prey to people professing any Gospel, until you have checked it out in God’s Word, don’t be gullible.

VERSE FOR TODAY: I John 2:28

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, never to be mislead by a false teacher, may I always question and know the truth.

**From the internet:**

***Why go to Church? (This is good)***

***If you're spiritually alive, you're going to enjoy this!***

***If you're spiritually dead, you probably won't want to read it.***

 ***But, if you're spiritually curious, there is still hope!

So . . . Why Go To Church?***
***A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it******made no sense to go to church every Sunday...***

 ***"I've gone for 30 years now,"
he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 203,000 sermons.***

***But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my
time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."***

***This was the start of a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:***

***"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this.. . They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"***

***When you are DOWN to nothing... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible!***

***Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!***

***All right, now that you're done reading, send it on! I think everyone should read this!***

***"When the devil is knocking at your door, simply say, "Lord, could you please get that for me?"*** ***Amen ! !***