Esther November 16

Loyalty and Courage

The story of Esther takes place in Persia while the Jews were still in exile.

Queen Vasti was ordered by King Xerxes to appear at a banquet but she refused! The King followed his advisors and decided to choose a new Queen.

Esther, a Jew, was groomed for the position and was chosen the new Queen. Mordecai, Esther's cousin, advised her to keep the fact that she was a Jew secret, because her life would be in danger, being Queen in a foreign court.

Haman became prime minister and everyone was to show respect to him but Mordecai refused and Haman hated him so much he decided not only to punish Mordecai but also have all the Jews killed!

Mordecai heard of Haman's plans for extermination and asked Esther for help!

At the second banquet for the King and Haman, when the King asked her what she wanted – Queen Esther answered, "If it pleases your Majesty to grant my humble request, my wish is that I may live and that my people may live. My people and I have been sold for slaughter..." Esther 7:3, 4a.

Haman was exterminated instead!

Esther revealed her identity with encouraged to save her people, we should reveal our Christian identity with courage and remain loyal to the Lord no matter what!

VERSE FOR TODAY: Be strong, be courageous, all you that hope in the Lord. Psalm 31:24.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Give me courage, O Lord, to proclaim your name even in the face of impending danger, let my loyalty always be totally to you.

Ezra November 17

The Exiles Return

Persia took over the city of Babylon and – In the first year that Cyrus of Persia was Emperor the Lord made what he had said through the prophet Jeremiah, come true. He prompted Cyrus to issue the following command... "May God be with all of you who are his people. You are to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is worshiped in Jerusalem." Ezra 1:1a, 3.

The Jews did return the Temple was rebuilt but not without opposition from Samaria and Darius the succeeding Emperor of Persia. The Temple was dedicated in Passover once again celebrated – For seven days a joyfully celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread. They were full of joy because the Lord had made the Emperor of Assyria favourable to them, so he supported them in their work of rebuilding the Temple of the God of Israel. Ezra 6:22.

Ezra, who was related to Aaron, was an expert in the Law of Moses. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, organized the Levites, led the people in prayer and rituals he also ended marriage between Jews and foreigners.

We may exile ourselves from the throne of God but we need only to seek forgiveness to return, God is always there and always loves us and forgives us, it is up to us to remain constant in our love and faith.

VERSE FOR TODAY: “…Now them, confess your sins to the Lord, and God of your ancestors, and do what pleases him…” Ezra 10:11a.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to keep my body, your Temple, cleansed and dedicated to doing what pleases you, O Lord.

Job November 18

The Suffering Faithful

Job was a very righteous man, he served God – he was a good man, careful not to do anything evil. Job 1:1b. Job was very richly blessed, with property and family.

Satan appeared to God and contended about Job – "But now supposed to take away everything he has – he will curse you to your face!"

“All right," the Lord said to Satan, "everything he has is in your power, but you must not hurt Job himself." So Satan left. Job 1:11, 12.

All of Job's children were killed, most of his servants, and all the animals were either killed or stolen. Job grieved but – He said, “I was born with nothing, and I will die with nothing. The Lord gave, and now he has taken away. May his name be praised!" Job 1:21.

Satan was allowed to have sores breakout on Job's body but Job remain faithful his friends even his wife wanted him to curse God and die.

Job, after much grief and suffering was finally restored to his original health and was blessed even more in the last part of his life that he was in the first part!

That seems to be the way in our lives, we have many blessings but when disaster strikes we’re down but if we don't lose faith will bounce back and find our lives even more blessed than before and our faith stronger.

VERSE FOR TODAY: In spite of everything that had happened, Job did not sin by blaming God. Job 1:22.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to know that you are Lord in both good and bad times, remembering to always praise your name.

Psalms November 19

The Psalmist

All the religious hymns, known as Psalms, were not written by David, but many were written by David. The Psalms deal with prayer, worship and praise of all kinds.

David did write one of the most beloved Psalms – The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (When the Lord is our keeper we shall have all of our needs.)

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (The Lord gives us rest in peace.)

He restores my soul: he leadth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (The Lord forgives and guides us through our lives if we call on his name.)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (With the Lord no evil can hurt us; we need not be afraid of anything not even death.)

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest his my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (The Lord gives us success in front of evil people, and our happiness spills over on others.)

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Goodness and mercy will be ours if we follow the Lord and we will spend eternity with the Lord.) Psalm 23 KJV.

This is an all around Psalm; used in time of sorrow he gives strength and hope.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105 KJV.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, to always know there is strength and comfort in your word and guide me to the selection that will help me in each time of need.

Proverbs November 20

Everyday Wisdom

The Proverbs were written by many writers, but Solomon, in his God-given wisdom wrote many Proverbs for everyday living:

* Hate stirs up trouble, but love overlooks all offenses.
* The Lord protects honest people, but destroys those who do wrong. Proverbs 10:12, 29.
* You do yourself a favor when you are kind, if you are cruel, you hurt yourself.
* Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped. Proverbs 11:17, 25.
* Your reward depends on what you say and what to do; you will get what you deserve.
* When you tell the truth, justice is done, but lies lead to injustice. Proverbs 12:14, 17.
* If you don't punish your son, you don't love him. If you do love him, you will correct him Proverbs 13:24.
* People make plan all kinds of things, but the Lord’S will is going to be done. Proverbs 19:21.
* Better to live on the roof then share the house with a nagging wife. Proverbs 21:9.
* Obey the Lord, be humble, and you will get riches, honour, and a long life. Proverbs 22:4.
* You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you. Proverbs 28:13.
* It is dangerous to be concerned with what others think of you, but if you trust the Lord, you are safe. Proverbs 29:25.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Righteousness makes a nation great; sin is a disgrace to any nation. Proverbs 14:34.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank you, O Lord, for Solomon's wisdom and the Holy Bible so I can make use of his wisdom in my life.

Isaiah November 21

What a Prophet

Isaiah recalled when he saw the Lord – In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple.

I said, "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among the people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes, I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!" Isaiah 6:1, 5.

One of the winged creatures that surrounded the Lord took a glowing coal from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips – and said, "This happens touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven." Isaiah 6:7b.

Isaiah prophesied for Israel through the pre-destruction, the exile and the reconstruction of Jerusalem with warnings, encouragement, promises and hope.

Isaiah brought a sign to King Ahaz, a hope that there was a brighter future for Israel – “…Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and rolled name him ‘Immanuel’…” Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah went beyond the birth of Christ in his prophecy; he even went into our future – The Lord says, "I am making a new Earth and the new heavens. The events of the past will be completely forgotten…” Isaiah 65:17.

God gave Isaiah great divine insight to span many centuries, we do not have that kind of insight but we can be secure in the fact that God keeps his promises, Immanuel was born!!

VERSE FOR TODAY: I answered, "I will go! Send me!" Isaiah 6:8b.

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, help me to be as eager as Isaiah to serve you.

Thanksgiving November 22

Only Once a Year?

How often do we really give thanks to the Lord? Not just for food aplenty but for everything, home, clothes and above all life itself. We need to be in daily, even hourly thankful prayer to God for everything in our lives. – In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always give thanks for everything to God the Father. Ephesians 5:20. As you sit down to your Thanksgiving turkey make a resolution to be thankful throughout the year.

We so often forget who makes the job, the money, the food in every facet of life possible; we forget it is God, if these things were not in his will for us they would not be. We have to work and earn but God gives us a healthy body to provide living. On the other hand there are many people who are not as healthy but God still provides in some way or takes them home to be with him.

Sometimes a simple thank you is the hardest thing to say, we must say it with a sincere heart, a heart into with God's love.

Remember – pray at all times – be persistent in prayer; keep alert as you pray giving thanks to God. 1Thessalonians 5:17 and Colossians 4:2.

We are not to be selfish in our praying and pray only for ourselves but to thank God for the friends and pray for them as well. We must never forget to thank God for his Son, who died on Calvary and rose again to give us eternal life in heaven.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Praise the Lord! Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good; his love is eternal. Psalm 106:1.

PRAYER THOUGHT: May I always be thankful to you for everything, all the time and especially for your Son.

Jeremiah November 23

God's Chosen Person

Jeremiah was one of the prophets that God sent to warn Israel and Judah of their impending fate if they did not change their ways.

Jeremiah recalls his calling – "I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you to be a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah 1:5.

We are chosen before our birth also as children of God, but yet we have the free choice to reject or accept Christ, the call is there if you only accept it!

Jeremiah answered that he was too young for such a calling, but the Lord said no that he wasn't too young and that he the Lord, would be with Jeremiah – Then the Lord stretched out his hand touched my lips and said to me, "Listen, I am giving you the words you must speak…" Jeremiah 1:9.

Jeremiah was given the words to speak and the protection of the Lord to withstand the rejection and hatred of all the people.

When witnessing to others we can depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us to the right choice of words, many times silence and radiating love is the best witness.

VERSE FOR TODAY: "…Do not be afraid of them, for I will be with you to protect you. I the Lord, have spoken!" Jeremiah 1:8.

PRAYER THOUGHT What peace you have given me, O Lord, just to know that you are always there to protect and guide me. Help me to plant the seeds of your Good News so that people will accept and not reject your salvation.