

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Monday, May 10

*Listen*

### John 17:15

**<sup>15</sup> I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.**

In the 1980's an American engineer John P. Allen was the director of Space Biospheres Ventures. In the Biosphere they tried to grow trees, but an interesting thing transpired. They would grow to only a certain height and then they'd fall over. The root system didn't continue to develop at the same rate as the tree trunk and branches so it would topple over. In another study done by Nicoll and Ray, Forestry Commission Research Division in Scotland, UK, 1995 they found that wind is essential to the development of a strong trunk and root system to support the tree.

Trees like people actually need challenges and difficulties to grow strong and weather the storms of life. It's nothing new. We'd like to protect our loved ones from ever having to deal with pain or disappointment, but then they wouldn't grow and learn to weather the storms of life. <sup>4</sup>"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4) God promises that He is with us through the darkest valley. He is there to comfort us.

In John 17:11-16 Jesus asks the Father to protect His disciples four times. He asks that God protect them in the name He gave Him, in the name of Jesus. Jesus protected them while he was with them, but now He asks God to protect them from the evil one. That doesn't mean that they had to go through difficult times. Paul and Silas were thrown in prison for casting out a spirit from a female slave who made money for her owners through fortune-telling. Yet Paul and Silas were severely flogged, thrown in prison, placed in the inner cell and their feet were fastened in stocks. What did Paul and Silas do, they were praying and singing hymns to God as the other prisoners listened to them. Then a violent earthquake shook the foundations of the prison and the prison doors opened and their chains fell off. (Acts 16:16-29) The jailer woke up and thought the prisoners had escaped and Paul shouted don't harm yourself. The jailer called for the lights and rushed in fell before Paul and Silas trembling and asked them, "Sirs (lords showing honor and respect), what must I do to be saved? Jesus doesn't ask that we have an easy life, or a life without difficulty. He protects us from the evil one (the devil), that His will would be carried out in the world. Jesus says, "They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world." (John 17:16) Jesus is there to protect you and guide you.

I'll never forget my older brother Stephen on the first day of High School he said, "If someone tries to pick a fight with you or gets on your case, tell him your Steve Irgens brother and they won't bother you, they know who I am." I knew by brother had my back.

Jesus Christ has your back. Not even the evil one will harm you. He calls you by name and says this is my child. This is the one whom we serve, others tremble at His name, but to us, He is our Savior, Lord and friend.

***Almighty God, thank you that in Jesus name you protect me from all the things that wish to harm me, and when I am tested, I know you are there with me every step of the way. Guide me to trust in You and not be afraid. Amen***

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Tuesday, May 11

Pray

### Acts 1:24-25

**24 Then they prayed and said, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”**

We are taught to be self-sufficient, never rely on someone else. Learn to do everything on your own. If you try and everything fails... then pray.

I think we have it all backwards. The first thing that we should do is pray. When we pray, it doesn’t have to be eloquent, pithy, deep or inspiring. We should simply be genuine in our prayer to God. Show Him your heart. He already knows it anyway. We never have to hide behind a façade or pretense. God already knows what is in our hearts and on our mind.

When we call to Him, He hears our cry. He knows what we need before we ask for it, but by asking we learn to trust and talk to God. The Lord spoke to Jeremiah, ***“<sup>12</sup>Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. <sup>13</sup>When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, <sup>14</sup>I will let you find me, says the Lord, (Jeremiah 29:12-14b)***

The disciples are told to ***“<sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19)*** Jesus tells them to obey all that he has commanded them. Then He says, ***“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20)***

Even though everything has changed, they still know that Jesus has promised to be with them to the end of all time. So, they go about choosing a new disciple, because they need twelve disciples. Jesus chose twelve which interestingly enough parallels the twelve Sons of Jacob (Jacob was later called Israel Genesis 32:22-32) and his sons become the twelve tribes of Israel.

Imagine the task the disciples had before them. They had to choose a new disciple, to go and tell the twelve tribes of Israel and the whole world that the Messiah had come. Jesus chose the original disciples, and you think they’d be worried about how important the decision was, but they weren’t. They prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen” (Acts 1:24)

Trust that God still does the choosing in our lives. He is there to guide us and uplift us. There is nothing that happens in our lives that isn’t ultimately for our good. All the experiences we have shape us into the people God desires us to be, if we listen to Jesus and His guidance. When you pray, expect that God is listening and that He does answer and will guide you. He is always faithful.

**Take 2 minutes** consider what God has been teaching you as you pray:

Feel free to end your prayer in this way:

***Almighty God, teach me talk to you with my heart. You already know it anyway. Help me to come to you first and ask for Your help. You are always there to guide me. Help me to see You at work in my life today. Amen***

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Wednesday, May 12

### Psalm 47: 2a

**“<sup>2</sup>For the Lord Most High is awesome ...”**

Have you ever heard the song, “Awesome God”? If you haven’t, take a moment to listen to the song (<https://youtu.be/gygRtVq5iM>). It is the first Christian (not from Sunday School) song that I remember hearing. I was about 12 or 13 years old when I went to a big church retreat. I remember how excited we all were to go- it was at a university and we felt “cool” being on the college campus. I can’t remember the name of the event or who the worship singers were, but I can remember hearing this song. (I loved it so much I even bought the singer’s CD.) I don’t have the CD any longer, but that song and the memory with it crosses my mind every so often. However, a few weeks ago, it was sung during Wednesday night worship. I closed my eyes, listened, and started singing. My niece was also watching the service and immediately texted me about it. It is a song that also seems to resonate with her.

Today’s Bible verse is a reminder of God’s awesomeness. It is just a snippet of Psalm 47 - A Psalm about praising God and reminding us that He is ruler over all of us and everything on earth. Our God is an awesome God!!

Activity 1: Sing along with the song Awesome God.

Activity 2: In addition to writing today’s verse, write about how you know God is awesome.

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Thursday, May 13

Study

Acts 1:16

<sup>16</sup>“Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus-

***“A man with one watch knows what time it is. A man with two watches is never sure.”***

Peter speaks now with the certainty that comes from seeing. He is focused on Jesus. He met Jesus awhile He was trying to fish for his daily catch. While he wasn't able to catch one fish, Jesus compels them to try again and He prevails. He calls Peter to fish for people, He watched Jesus heal a man with leprosy, teach the Pharisees, scribes and teachers with wisdom beyond their understanding. For three years he sat under his teachings and it all made sense after Jesus rose from the dead and commissioned them saying, ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)*** Then 2 men in white robes (angels) stood by them and said, <sup>11</sup>They said, ***“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)*** It's as if the angels are asking them why are you wasting your time looking up to heaven. Jesus is going to come again in the same way you saw Him leave. Now everything makes perfect sense. They didn't hide any more, instead they constantly devoted themselves to prayer, they were witnesses to what Christ had done. The LORD was with them.

Peter knew what Jesus meant when he called them to tell others that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The Messiah had come and everyone needed to know. There were twelve disciples that Christ chose. One disciple for each of the tribes of Israel, so that all could hear and believe. All of the prophecies had been fulfilled. Jesus the Messiah had come. Now they would go throughout Israel to the ends of the earth and tell what Jesus Christ the Messiah had done. They were to look to Jesus their shepherd for guidance. The one who died for the forgiveness of sins.

Just as King David was chosen by God through the Prophet Samuel. God would guide them to choose one more disciple, one who had seen all that Jesus did and could proclaim to all people the coming of the Messiah.

Peter knew if a new disciple would be chosen it would be by God's hand, ***“for the LORD (Yahweh) does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7d)*** We are called to trust in the same way as Peter and the disciples did. It is God who directs our path. He knows what is best for us and is there to lead and guide us along the way. Our minds should be singular focused on Christ and certain that He will guide us as His children. It's all in His timing.

***Almighty God, teach me to trust in Your timing and to know that we can be certain that You are always there guiding me. We are the sheep of Your pasture. Let me not be afraid, but to place my trust in You today. Amen***

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Friday, May 14

**Hymn:** Give to Our God Immortal Praise

**Scripture:** [Psalm 136](#)

**History:** Give to our God Immortal Praise was written by Issac Watts (1674-1748). Watts was an English Christian minister (Congregational), hymn writer, theologian, and logician. He was a prolific and popular hymn writer and is credited with some 750 hymns. He is recognized as the "Godfather of English Hymnody"; many of his hymns remain in use today and have been translated into numerous languages. [1] It is as a writer of psalms and hymns that he is everywhere known. Some of his hymns were written to be sung after his sermons, giving expression to the meaning of the text upon which he had preached. [2]

**Devotion:** The text to our hymn is based on [Psalm 136](#). ***O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. (v.1)*** This song expresses praise to God because of His greatness and what He has done. But the thought of singing praises in difficult and trying times is not the first thing we all think to do. How many times have we tried to solve our problems or overcome some adversity or sadness on our own and we just seem to become more down? When the pandemic started, the small group which my husband and I are a part of looked at the scripture of Philippians 4:4-7: ***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** These words are much like that of Psalm 136 as they encourage us to give praise and thanks to God in ALL situations. I began saying the words, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" whenever I felt frustrated, sad, upset, etc. It changed my feelings from within and gave me a whole different outlook. When I sing praises to the Lord, my spirits are lifted and my focus shifts from my problems to the great Problem Solver. It is truly amazing how any difficult situation we may face becomes much easier if we remember to turn to God in thanksgiving for all He provides for us. Truly His steadfast love endures forever and His peace keeps our hearts and minds in Him.

1 Give to our God immortal praise!

Mercy and truth are all his ways;  
Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat his mercies in your song.

2 He sent his Son with pow'r to save  
From guilt and darkness and the grave.

Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat his mercies in your song.

3 Give to the Lord of lords renown;  
The King of kings with glory crown.

His mercies ever shall endure  
When lords and kings are known no more!

**Prayer:** Dear God. To You we give our praise not only for all You do for us physically and spiritually, but what You promise for us eternally. Help us to remember to turn to You with rejoicing so that in every situation You can lift us up and help us through our trials. It is truly through Your power that we are blessed, and we know Your mercies endure forever. AMEN.

Sources:

[1] [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)

[2] [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org)

## **Saving Grace Daily Devotion**

Saturday, May 15

*Prepare for Worship*

**1 John 5:11**

**<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

What better words could we have as we prepare for worship! As we come to him, we remember all that he has given us. Not only that, but we receive it all again in his very word so that we might be sustained in this life. And we sure do need it. Often, just being alive feels a lot less than truly living. We are beaten down by conflict and disagreements, worries and burdens, trials and disappointments. So, we have to hear again that God has given us eternal life in his Son and he is happy to remind us. He knows that we need the reminder because we might think he's slow, but he is only being patient.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we need good news to bring us back to life. We're tired and worn out by what we call "living" here without your Word. So, give us ears to hear so that we might be reminded that we have been given Jesus Christ and our life is now tied up in his. It's in his name we pray, Amen

## **Saving Grace Daily Devotion**

Sunday, May 16

*Praise*

### **John 17:10**

**<sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.**

Jesus receives glory simply by owning his ragtag group of misfits that he has purchased with his blood. He has accomplished what he has set out to do! He was sent so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. And this has been going on for hundreds and hundreds of years. God has gathered up millions and millions over the centuries through what Christ has done on the cross. Apart from Christ we would have all been lost, but we are saved to the credit of the loving plan of the Father and the gracious work of the Son. God's business is moving forward just as it should. A great multitude have been made children of the Father and just our being around, saved by grace, brings glory to Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we are so thankful that you have claimed us as your children. Otherwise, we were all orphans in this world with an absentee father in the devil who tricked us into doubt and left us to die in the consequences. But, you, O Lord, saved us to be your children that we might have joy and love you with our whole heart. We praise you in Jesus' name, Amen