

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Monday, November 2

Listen

Amos 5:18

¹⁸ Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light...

This is *not* good news. The day of the Lord is the day that God corrects wrongdoing. For the Israelites, during the time of the prophet Amos, this day was coming soon. There was an awareness that people weren't on their best behavior in those times. But the Israelites pointed their judging finger at everyone else but themselves. There was famine, drought, sickness, mold, and parasites. God sent these things so that the Israelites might come to their senses and turn back to him in faith. Instead, the Israelites pointed their judging finger at the neighbors as if they caused all of these bad things to happen with *their* sin against the God of Abraham. They called for the day of the Lord! They said, "God make things right and punish the sinner in the land!" They couldn't get it through their thick skulls that God saw them as the sinners in the land along with the neighboring countries in the land. Remembering this kind of judgement helps us to approach God with humble reverence. We are not without our own shortcomings. We have blind spots and "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," (Rom 3:23). God doesn't allow us to assume anything based on ourselves (for example, "I think I've lived a good enough life..."). Instead, he wants us to trust in his righteous judgement about our sin and Jesus Christ.

Take **2 minutes** to think about these verses in Amos. If it helps fill the time answer these questions:

Who or what group are you most critical of? Concerning sin, are they any different from the best Christian example you know?

How has God judged your sin? (Don't know the answer? Read Colossians 3:13-15)

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Tuesday, November 3

Pray

Amos 5:23-24

²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

We continue to read God's judgement against his people Israel. The prophet highlights a tragic disconnect the people maintain between worship and how they treat their neighbors. They are singing, playing instruments, making sacrifices of grain and livestock, holding week long festivals in the name of the Lord. Yet, when it comes to human relationships, "they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals—those who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted," (Amos 2:6-7). It goes on to list sins of both a sexual and religious nature. God sees it all and becomes disgusted with their worship because of their hypocrisy. They sing songs to the God of mercy, but they bring harsh judgements against one another. They hold festivals for the God of truth, but they lie in business and marriage in order to get whatever they want. God tells them what needs to be different. Be concerned with justice and righteousness in your relationships and you will have a new relationship with me. But the people do not want to hear the prophet. We must hear the judgement that is leveled against the people. But Amos doesn't leave it at that. He promises hope for a future when a new King David will reign and there will be so much good people won't know what to do with it. But for now, we hear the judgement and we can pray that our hearts would be open to the transformation that God is calling for.

Take **2 minutes** to pray about what God has been teaching you in the Scripture.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23)

How we treat people reveals what we think about God.

God desires justice and righteousness for all relationships.

Pray: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we can see injustice and unrighteousness in our land and throughout the world. It is too much for us to bear, too much for us to understand. Lord, we don't ask this lightly, please bring justice and righteousness into the world and do it first in my own life, in my own heart. I'm in as much need as the next person and I know that you need to make this change in my heart. We are trusting you for it in Jesus' name, Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

During the month of November, the entries for our Bible journal are going to be about being thankful or grateful or giving thanks. While we should always be these things, November seems to be a month that we use to focus on “thanksgiving”.

2020 has been a trying year for many of us. Despite the challenges we may have faced this year, there is always something to be thankful for.

Each Wednesday in November, in addition to writing the verse and doing the activities listed, reflect on the verse and write down (or just think about) the things that you are thankful for. Send up an extra prayer thanking God for those things.

November 4, 2020

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Activity 1: Write down your anxieties; then write a prayer to God over those anxieties (i.e. write on top of the anxieties that you wrote down as a reminder that you have nothing to worry about with God. Don't forget to thank God for the wonderful things that He has done in your life.)

Activity 2: Draw a heart; write 'GOD' in big letters over the heart to remind you that God will always guard your heart.

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Thursday, November 5

Study

1 Thessalonians 4:17

¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

The Rapture. You may have heard of it at a church service or in a Bible Study. You may have read the *Left Behind* novels. This is one of the only passages in Scripture that talks specifically about the rapture. Another being in Matthew 24 where “two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.” God hasn’t remained silent about what’s next for the world, the church, and all of humanity. At the same time, he has left some things about the end of this world a mystery. “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only,” (Mt 24:36). Whatever God has chosen to keep secret will remain a secret until he reveals it. Yet, we have words here to the church in Thessalonica about this event people have called the rapture. Paul was writing to them concerning loved ones who have died. Have you ever wondered, “Where is my wife now that she has died? What if Christ returns while I’m still alive after she has passed? Will she miss out on some part of the resurrection?” Those Christians in Thessalonica had become discouraged with questions like these—some on the brink of hopelessness. That’s why Paul writes, “we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope,” (1 Thess. 4:13). So, Paul goes on to tell us that there’s no need to worry about those who have died before Christ’s return. They will actually be raised from the dead first. Then, every Christian that is still alive will be caught up in the air to meet Christ in heaven. That’s what is going to happen. But, recognize this: Paul tells us about “the rapture” to bring us comfort. If we are ever afraid about this event and what it entails, then we should remind ourselves that Paul told us about the rapture to comfort and encourage us. If it is causing fear, then it is not working properly in our souls. Instead, the word is meant to be used as an encouragement, “Therefore encourage one another with these words,” (1 Thess. 4:18).

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, often we are curious about life after death and the coming of the Lord—especially when we think of loved ones who have died before us. Would you let your Word minister to our souls so that we might understand what you have revealed so that it might give us comfort in times of worry, in Jesus’ name, Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Friday, November 6

Hymn Devotion: *The King Shall Come* by John Brownlie

Tune: Consolation (Morning Song) - English Folk Tune

Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13 - The parable of the ten bridesmaids.

1 The King shall come when morning dawns
And light triumphant breaks,
When beauty gilds the eastern hills
And life to joy awakes.

2 Not as of old a little child,
To bear and fight and die,
But crowned with glory like the sun
That lights the morning sky.

3 Oh, brighter than the rising morn
When Christ, victorious, rose
And left the lonesome place of death,
Despite the rage of foes.

4 Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
Shall dawn upon our race
The day when Christ in splendor comes,
And we shall see his face.

5 The King shall come when morning dawns
And light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
Come quickly, King of kings.

The text of *The King Shall Come* was included in *Hymns from the East* (1907) by Scottish minister John Brownlie (1859-1925). This collection of devotional translations, which Brownlie called "suggestions", was from the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Because no Greek original has ever been found, scholars now assume that the text is not a translation but a "suggestion": an original text by Brownlie that reflects his wide knowledge of Greek hymnody.

Brownlie's contribution to church music was significant: he published three volumes of original hymn texts, including *Pilgrim Songs* (1892); he wrote a handbook (1899) to the 1898 edition of the Scottish Presbyterian hymnal, *The Church Hymnary*; and he published several volumes of English translations of Greek and Latin hymns, including *Hymns from East and West* (1898) and *Hymns from the East* (1907).

Reflection: Infused with the imagery of morning light typical of early Greek hymnody, this hymn stirs hope in the hearts of all who look forward to the return of Christ. "The King Shall Come" is a confession of faith in the sure return of our Lord; His coming again will occur in a blaze of glory, which will far surpass his earthly death and resurrection. The text concludes with a paraphrase of the ancient prayer of the church-"Maranatha," or "Lord, come quickly" (Rev. 22:20).

Jesus tells us the parable of the ten bridesmaids to illustrate the need to prepare for the second coming of Christ. In Matthew 25:13, Jesus says - "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." The hymn text states "The King shall come when morning dawns." It will truly be the dawn of a glorious day when we experience Christ in all His glory in the kingdom of heaven. Are you awake? Are you ready?

Prayer: Loving Christ. We thank You daily for all You have provided us. Help us to share our God-given gifts with others, love one another, forgive others as You forgive us, and live our lives according to Your Word. Please guide us to be good Christians so that our lamps may be full and we are ready to join you in Your heavenly kingdom for all eternity. In Your name we pray. AMEN

Source: www.hymnary.org (*Psalter Handbook*)

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Saturday, November 7

Prepare for Worship

Matthew 25:13

"¹³ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Have you ever tried to get ready to go camping, vacation or just a road trip? It isn't easy. There are those who make a list of all the things they need. They change the oil, gas up the car some even get their car serviced, just to make sure everything's ready. Then there's the list of things you need to bring for camping or your vacation. That list is a little longer. You always seem to forget something, that's why the hotels have complementary soap, shampoo and desirable amenities. It isn't easy to get ready. Even though we have gas gauges, warning lights and some cars have the number of miles until you run out of gas, 800,000 drivers a year still run out of gas on the road. It wasn't like that 2,000 years ago.

In Matthew 25:1-13, we read that it was customary to have the groom and his companions come to the bride's home. Then the bridesmaids would go out to meet him. Finally, they would accompany the bride and groom as a wedding party to the wedding. Wisdom is central in this parable (story) that Jesus tells. There are wise and foolish bridesmaids. The wise are prepared with enough oil for the night. The foolish have forsaken wisdom, are unprepared and are lost in the moment. ***"Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it costs all you have, get understanding." (Proverbs 4:6-7)*** Wisdom in the Old and New Testament is a righteous woman. She is there to protect you and watch over you. She is discerning, knowing when to correct and encourage, when to speak and when to keep silent. (She) wisdom comes from God. It makes sense that, ***"The fear (awesome reverence and respect) of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)*** Wisdom intervenes and protects the one who listens.

The bridesmaids who have wisdom, ***"a fear of the LORD and knowledge of the Holy One" (ibid)*** are ready for the coming of the groom. The others who are foolish, they haven't listened to the wisdom of God and are unprepared.

We are called to be ready for Christ's coming. That means we listen to God's wisdom, not getting lost in futile speculation about when it will be, but always prepared following Christ with His Word (the Scripture) central in our lives. ***"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)*** The Lord guides us through the Scriptures that we might be sustained in our weakness and encouraged for tomorrow. God's Wisdom is there to guide us as we await Christ's coming.

Almighty God, teach me to speak when I ought to and remain silent when it is helpful. Encourage me to walk with You with an awesome reverence wherever You lead me, that I may always be prepared as Your servant. Amen