

Friday, January 19, 2018

Forsaken

Revelation 1-2

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.

Revelation 2:4

Reading through the different letters to the churches that are found in the first chapters of Revelation allows me to ask myself hard questions, beginning with the letter to the church in Ephesus. I can't help but remember the prayer that Paul offered for this church. *"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"* (Ephesians 3:17b-19). This church had been rooted and established in love. Yet, somehow they had forgotten this love. There was still much for which they could be commended. They were faithful to work hard and to hold truth. They persevered and worked hard without getting weary. But something was lost—the foundation of love. They had lost the proper motive. This can happen so easily in my life. My heart drifts. I get so busy doing the work of the Lord that I lose my time with the Lord. I must always find time to sit with my Savior and rest in Him. I must find regular time to remind myself of His love for me and mine for Him. This world draws me away from that special time and I drift from my first love.

Father, please hold me fast in Your love. Do not let me drift away. It happens so slowly. I look up and see that I have once again wandered from my first love. You know my heart, dear Father. Let me hold on to Your love. Amen.

Saturday, January 20, 2018

Worthy

Revelation 3-4

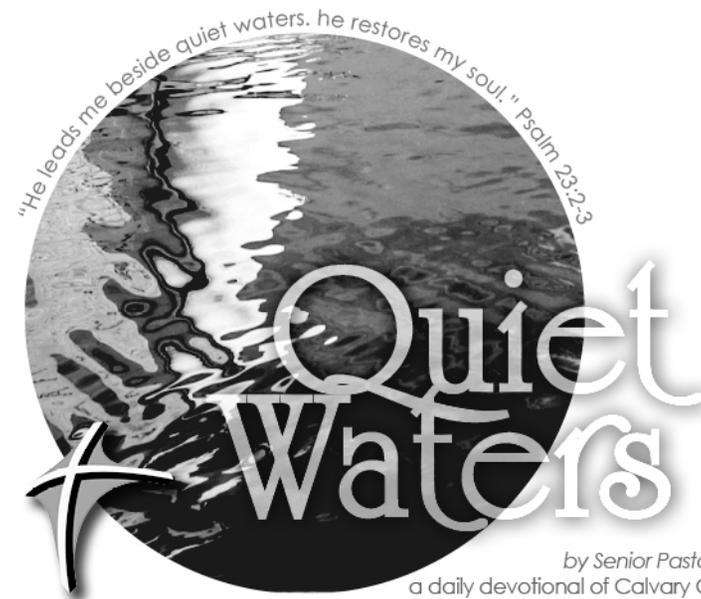
"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Revelation 4:11

Here is a glimpse into the throne room of Heaven. The imagery allows me to imagine, but really, that is all I can do at this point. John has been blessed to see the throne. He tries to describe that which is heavenly with worldly descriptions. The visuals are hard to explain, but the worship is not. It is complete and it is focused. It never stops and it is not hindered. Every moment of every day God is adored. I try to grasp this scene and I am left with wonder and awe. I long to worship God in this way. I long to see Him worshiped in this way. I long for the day that I am free to worship Him without distraction. I long for that day when I truly am aware, with my whole being, that He is worthy of all my praise, for that day when nothing comes between me and my worship of Him.

Father, please overwhelm me with a sense of Your worthiness. I know that when I see You on Your throne, with no sin between us, I will understand Your glory and majesty in new ways, but I pray that You would open my heart wider to Your majesty here and now so that I may move ever closer to this kind of worship of You in my life, my Almighty Lord and King. Amen.

January 15 - 20, 2018



Monday, January 15, 2018

Child of God

1 John 3-4

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him... This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.
1 John 3:1, 10

These two chapters need to be read and reread slowly so that I can allow the word of God to read me. John understood the love of God—perhaps more than any other person. It is evident in this letter. He understands the lavishing of God's love upon His children. When I think of that word "lavish," I think of being under a waterfall and the non-stop rush of water that takes my breath away. That is the way the love of the Father pours over His children. Each person who has come to know this love and has accepted Jesus as Savior is a child of God—with many brothers and sisters. One of the identifying characteristics of a child of God is that they love the other children of God. The world does not; indeed, it cannot. It does not know. But the family of God does know. So, if one does not love a family member or if the deeds of one who claims to be a child of God are not right (consistently) then that person is a child of the devil. This is true, even if they think they are a child of God. Love is of great importance to God. Love must display itself in my life as I display the love of my Father.

Father, thank You that I know that I am Your child. My heart is to do right before You and to love Your children. I need Your help with this Lord. All too often I get focused on me and my needs and forget the importance of Your family. Amen.

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Life

1 John

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
1 John 5:11-13

John closes this special letter with assurances. Throughout the letter, he has been making it clear that true children of God live differently. Now he reveals the reason why that is. Children of God have life. Those who are not children of God do not have life. They are spiritually dead. Life comes from God. He is the Author of life. While each person is given breath and physical life, only those who turn in repentance to God are adopted into His family (John 1:12-13). These are the chosen ones of God! His family. They each are given life—life that is eternal. Each child of God believes in the name of the Son of God—in other words, all that He is and all that He represents. This is life eternal—knowing God (John 17:3). Jesus makes it possible for me to know God as my Father—even to the point of recognizing Him as Abba. Knowing the Father intimately is what it means to be alive. That knowledge brings a change to the way I live. It must. It is unavoidable. That is how I know that I am a child of God. I have this life that has changed me and is continuing to change me more and more into the image of my Father.

Father, oh how I love You. You have given me life beyond anything I could have imagined. You have change me and You continue to change me and allow me to bask in the life that is eternal and is found in You alone. Draw me ever closer to You, Abba, that I may know You more and reflect You more in all that I do and say. Amen.

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

Truth

2 & 3 John

"To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth—because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth just as the Father commanded us.
2 John 1-4

Five times in these three verses we read the word "truth." John proclaims that it brings him great joy to hear that some of the children are walking in truth. "Truth" here refers to the gospel and what the gospel brings into a life when it is accepted. John is probably writing to a church here, referring to the members as the children of this church. He is speaking to them of the unity and love that come to the whole Church (all who know the truth) through the power of the gospel. It is this gospel that holds us in the hope of grace, mercy, and peace, that will be with us in truth and in love. It is critical to know the truth of God and to walk in that truth. It is so easy to be deceived. Deception—even the slightest bit—takes me away from God and keeps me from walking in the truth and the love of God. The truth is life; deception is death. I must learn to walk in the truth every moment of the day and be overwhelmed with the life it brings not only to me, but to all that I have the joy of meeting!

Father, please help me live in the truth of the gospel in love as it is lived out in me. Help me live in the grace, mercy, and love that You have bestowed upon me, as I look forward to that moment of their complete and eternal fulfillment. Amen.

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Contend

Jude

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."
Jude 3

I remember a conversation that I had with a friend a while back. He said that he was studying the book of Jude and was struck by the fact that we are to contend for the faith. Contend means to compete, it is like the intense competition of a sporting event. What does it look like for me to compete for the faith? It is interesting here that Jude reveals that this faith has been entrusted to us as saints! Ponder that for a moment. God has entrusted you and me with the faith *once and for all*. He has entrusted me with the faith so that I will contend for the faith—for Him! Contending for the faith means standing up for and proclaiming the truth of salvation. This is the salvation I share with each and every member of the Church at large. Our call is to partner together to make that salvation known. It is an urging that comes to me through this text. It is important that we urge one another on!

Father, help me share in and share out the gospel of Your salvation. Help me to be bold and contend for the faith that has been entrusted to me! Amen.